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EDITOR'S CORNER

Taking a cue from the big league baseball players, maybe it's time for Professional Wrestlers to form a union too. There was plenty of debate and many things written about the abbreviated baseball players strike this past summer. Practically everyone sided with the owners, considering the fact that even mediocre baseball players earn an extraordinary amount of money. But for the ballpayers money was still the key issue. Their main objective was to have the owners increase the amount of money that is put into their pension plans. The owners finally agreed to increase the intake, and the strike was called off. Although there were other points raised, the ballplayers' main objectives dealt with their pension plan.

Professional Wrestlers, on the other hand, do not have anything remotely resembling a pension plan. For that matter, they don't even have medical coverage in case of an injury. If a wrestler suffers an injury and is out of action for any length of time he doesn't receive anything at all from promoters. In some cases a "loyal" employee might be compensated while injured, but in the majority of cases if a wrestler is injured he will not receive a dime until he returns to the ring.

Today, due to the proliferation of cable television, promoters are reaping profits like never before. Maybe the time has come for the wrestlers to band together and demand that a pension system be set up. At the very least the medical coverage, as well as compensation for lost earnings, should be provided if a wrestler is injured in the ring.

In some states it is a law that local promoters must provide workman's compensation insurance for the wrestlers in case of injury, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Injuries are common in this sport. For this reason wrestlers should have some protection. The baseball players union fought for their pension, and they are still fighting today even though their salaries are so exorbitant and they also receive a fair amount from television revenue.

Today, with the TV wrestling explosion on cable, the promoters are making a nice profit. Granted, stars such as Hulk Hogan, Roddy Piper, Andre the Giant, Ric Flair, and others are earning a sizable income, but the majority of wrestlers don't earn anything near their income. All it takes is one serious injury and a career is over. The time has come to unionize wrestling. Then the wrestlers will be assured of some sort of retribution in case of a serious ring injury.

■ **GEORGE NAPOLITANO**

While many blood-thirsty grapplers like Carlos Colon and Abdullah the Butcher (pictured above) go at each other tooth and nail, the promoters do not provide any sort of medical insurance or pension plans for their employees. Maybe it's time for Professional Wrestlers to bond together and form a union which can fight for their rights.

Letters To The Editor

Each month Wrestling's MAIN EVENT reserves this space to print the opinions of our readers. If there's something about wrestling itchin' at your insides, just drop a line to Wrestling's MAIN EVENT, Pumpkin Press, Inc. (Dept. LT), Empire State Building, New York, NY, 10118.

Let us know what *you* think!!

MISSING IN ACTION

I love your magazine, it's the best! I think that wrestling is the best sport there is today. Lately, I have become a Missing Link fan and appreciate his ability and strength. I wish he would get a title shot at Hulk Hogan so he could prove how good he really is. Could you do me a big favor and write a story on him and include a centerfold in an upcoming issue. Thanks a lot, from a big Missing Link fan!

Todd Porter
Ypsilanti, MI

Cartoon by Tom Thorspecken

Ed. Note: We're glad to hear that you enjoy the Missing Link and WME, Todd, and we recommend that you turn back to our June '85 issue which featured an article on the Link while he was wrestling in Florida, and included a full color page of your hero as well.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE WWF

I think people (including the press) are being just a little rough on the WWF. True, I did not like Cyndi Lauper or Mr. T getting involved, but now, or should I say for now, the celebrities seem to be pretty much out of the ring. So we should all be able to settle down and watch the talented WWF wrestlers take center ring.

Well, I found out that is not so. People are still rough on the WWF, months after "Wrestlemania" and the celebrity involvement.

The WWF has a much bigger problem that has been noted, but this problem was temporarily overshadowed by the celebrity rush the WWF had. I think the people have finally had their fill of this problem now.

The problem is an overstuffed, talentless ape named Hulk Hogan. Hogan is what is really undermining the WWF, and is doing (in the long run) more bad than good. He is blocking out the sun (the talented wrestlers, "Piper's Pit") and clouding the fans' view.

Hogan is more interested in Holly-

COLLECTORS EDITIONS

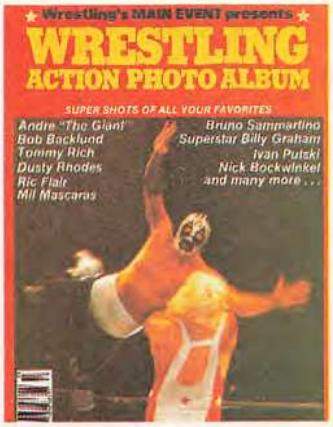

PHOTO ACTION ALBUM 1

WME's PHOTO ACTION ALBUM was a landmark publication presenting the serious wrestling fan with the opportunity to own the first publication dedicated to capturing the greatest wrestlers in that fleeting moment when they're at their brutal high flying best.

PHOTO ACTION ALBUM 2

WME's PHOTO ACTION ALBUM 2. The second volume of what is destined to be a classic series of wrestling publications. Another thrilled packed action photo album of the greatest stars of the squared circle in all their brutal glory. Many of your favorite stars are depicted on every page.

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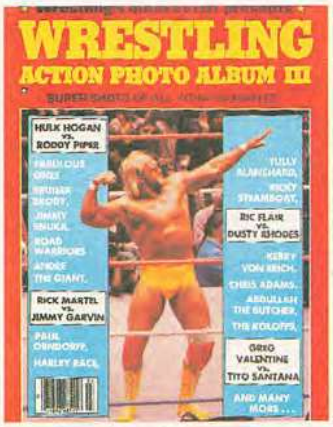
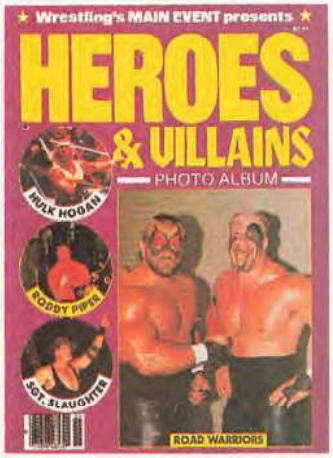


PHOTO ACTION ALBUM III

WME's PHOTO ACTION ALBUM III is the third in the trilogy of these exciting pictoral publications. As in albums one and two, this magazine concentrates on capturing the leading mat-stars of today in the act of mortal combat, and our top-notch photography is high-lighted by our bold full-page format.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

HEROES AND VILLAINS is WME's way of presenting our readers with a magazine strung cover to cover with close-up portraits of some of the most popular stars of the Squared Circle, along with some of the most despised, all neatly cropped on our trademark high gloss paper and suitable for framing. Don't be the last one on your block to have these great pictures hanging on *your* wall!

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wood than wrestling, and I wish someone would make him an offer he can't refuse and get him the hell out of the WWF. But, until then, people have to brush the clouds (Hogan) out of their eyes, and see all the wonderful things the WWF has to offer. Stop coming down so hard on the *entire* WWF—sit down and enjoy the matches and "Piper's Pit," just turn the sound off and go to the bathroom when Hogan comes on!

Ric Mill
Vineland, NJ

GIT ALONG, DOGGIES

This is an open letter to the British Bulldogs. We need you over here in the NWA. Somebody has to teach The Andersons a lesson, and you are the guys to do it! Everybody is trying to stop them, but they aren't doing the job. When you guys come over here you can kick their butts, take their belts, embarrass them, and the job's finished. Please consider this letter, the NWA needs you!

J.B. Boyette
Panama City Beach, FL

BUDDING "NATURE BOY"

Being the best wrestling magazine today, I'm shocked you haven't done a story on one of the greatest in the NWA: "Nature Boy" Buddy Landell. This young man is a fine talented athlete who hasn't really received any attention in your fine magazine. Someday Landell will be the World's Heavyweight Champion, it's just a matter of time. Please give Landell the coverage he deserves! Thank you.

Tom Maloney
Stamford, CT

Ed. Note: Thanks for your letter, Tom, and as you can see by glancing at our contents page, WME's wasted no time at all in honoring your request for an article on Buddy Landell. We hope you enjoy it!

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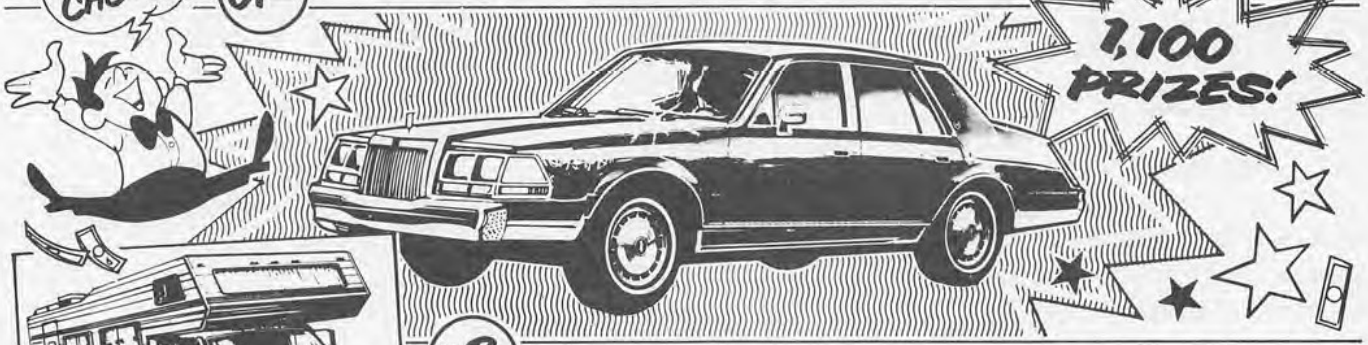

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WRESTLING'S ROUND-UP

A monthly report on all the latest happenings in the world of Professional Wrestling . . .

We hope you will enjoy this issue of Wrestling's MAIN EVENT. Since our last issue, WWF Champion **Hulk Hogan** has successfully defended his belt against **Brutus Beefcake.** NWA Champion **Ric Flair** has turned back the challenges of **Nikita Koloff,** while AWA Champion **Rick Martel** has put his belt on the line against Freebird **Michael Hayes.** Although each opponent gave the champions quite a struggle, all the titles still remain intact. . . .

In the WWF, the "Hart Foundation" led by **Jimmy Hart** has been doing very well. **Jim "The Anvil" Neidhardt** and **Brett "Hit Man" Hart** are quickly moving up in the rankings. **Greg Valentine** has regained top form after a setback at the hands of **Tito Santana,** while **King Kong Bundy** has returned from a very successful tour of the Orient. The big man has set his sights on **Andre the Giant,** and if anyone can knock the Giant off his feet it's the massive Bundy. . . .

Roddy Piper and **Ace Orton** continue to cause problems for everyone throughout the WWF area. But Piper and Orton recently lost to the super team of **Paul Orndorff** and **Andre the Giant** in New York's Madison Square Garden. . . .

The WWF has introduced **Les Thornton** to television viewers as their new Light Heavyweight Champion. Thornton's been around for awhile, and has some great moves in his extensive repertoire. . . .

Husky Uncle Elmer continues to enjoy porportionate success in the WWF. **Hillbilly Jim's** buddy is one big dude! He stands 6'8" and weighs more than 400 pounds. . . .

On the AWA front, **The Freebirds** and the **Road Warriors** are feuding. The Bad Street Brawlers and the tough guys from Chicago's South Side have been waging war all over the country, and suprisingly the fans have sided with the Warriors in these clashes. Not too long ago the Road Warriors were totally despised by everyone, but today things are quite different. . . .

The Irwins have looked very good since entering the AWA. While the Warriors and Freebirds battle for the top spot, the Irwins continue to win. Don't be too surprised if **Scott** and

King Kong Bundy has recently returned from a successful tour of the Orient.

Photos by George Napolitano, Jeremy Tepper, and Bill Otten

Wild Bill Irwin slip in the back door while the 'Birds and Warriors knock each other off. . . .

"Iceman" Parsons has really come on strong in the World Class area. The Iceman now holds the American Championship by virtue of his victory over **Chris Adams.** Adams, meanwhile, still holds the Tag-Team Title along with **Gino Hernandez.** The World Class Six-Man Champions are **Killer Brooks, Maniac Mark Lewin** and the **One Man Gang. Gary Hart** was elated when his team defeated his number one rivals, the **Von Erich** brothers. . . .

World Championship Wrestling has been chalking up impressive ratings on the Superstation, WTBS. The ratings have climbed to an all-time high, thanks to the fantastic matches and great talent that appear each week on the Superstation. WTBS is now in the middle of a championship showdown. Every NWA titleholder, with the exception of the World's Champion **Ric Flair,** has agreed to defend his belt on TV. One of the best TV Championship matches in quite some time was the 20 minute draw waged between the new United States Champion, **Tully Blanchard,** and former North American Champion **Terry Taylor.** The match had everyone sitting on the edge of their seats. Taylor, by the way, is one of the best young talents in the business. The likeable star could be a champion again soon. . . .

The biggest feud in the World Championship territory centers around **Jim Cornette's Midnight X-Press** and the **Sawyer Brothers.** These two teams have gone at it hot and heavy all over the country, with the X-Press holding a slight edge in victories. . . .

Harley Race is back on top in Missouri. The former NWA Champion recently defeated **Crusher Blackwell** for the title in a wild bout in St. Louis. . . .

Mr. Pogo continues to hold the Central States Title. The villainous Pogo has had a long reign as champion. . . .

Roddy Piper and his bodyguard "Ace" Orton welcome Les Thornton, the new WWF Jr. Heavyweight Champion, onto the set of "Piper's Pit."

Good ol' Uncle Elmer has made quite an impression on the WWF fans.

"Playboy" Buddy Rose is back in action in the Pacific Northwest.

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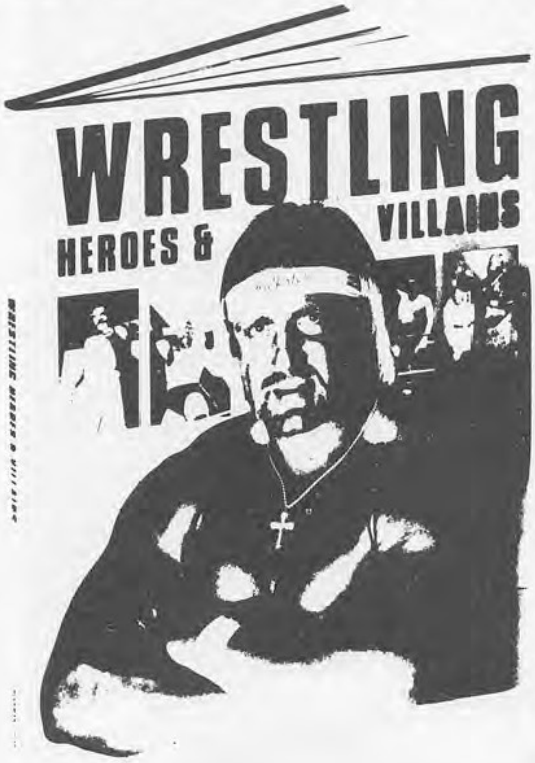

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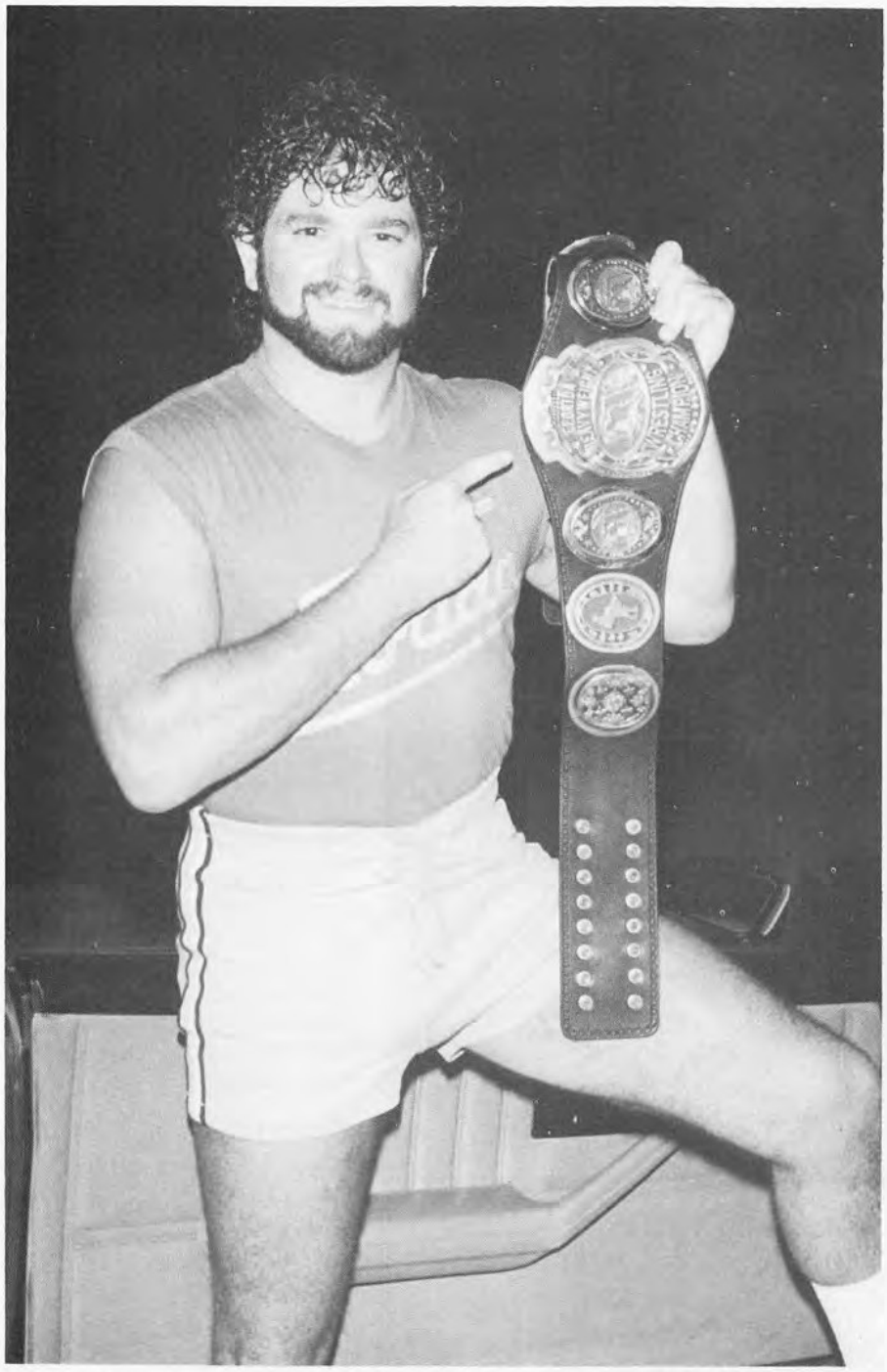

Former pushover Jack Hart proudly points to the Florida Belt he now calls his own.

Rip Oliver and the Masked Grappler make for one of the toughest tag-teams in Florida wrestling.

"Lady" Maxine has been keeping an eye on Miss Brenda Britton, and has been appearing as a valet for Bugsy McGraw and Wahoo McDaniel.

Rick Rude has regained the Southern championship in the Sunshine State. The talented Rude won the belt in a tournament that was set up after **Hercules Hernandez** forfeited the title. This is Rude's second reign as champion, and his manager **Percival Pringle** is ecstatic to have his man back on top again. . . .

Relative newcomer **Jack Hart** has put his disappointing beginnings behind him and improved his losing record by winning the Florida Title in yet another tournament. Hart can expect a challenge from former champion **Hector Guererro,** however. . . .

Rip "The Crippler" Oliver has been teaming up with the **Masked Grappler** in Florida, and these two aggressive mat-stars intend to give **Wahoo McDaniel** and the ever-popular **Billy Haynes** quite a battle for the tag-team belts. . . .

Kendall Windham has looked very good in his recent Florida bouts. Kendall has the potential to become just as successful as his brother, **Barry**. . . .

"Hustler" **Rip Rogers** and **Miss Brenda Britton** are still causing trouble in Florida. **"Lady" Maxine,** however, has been monitoring Ms. Britton's behavior, and serving as a valet for **Bugsy McGraw** and **Wahoo McDaniel**. . . .

Hacksaw Butch Reed has returned to the Mid-South and is once again

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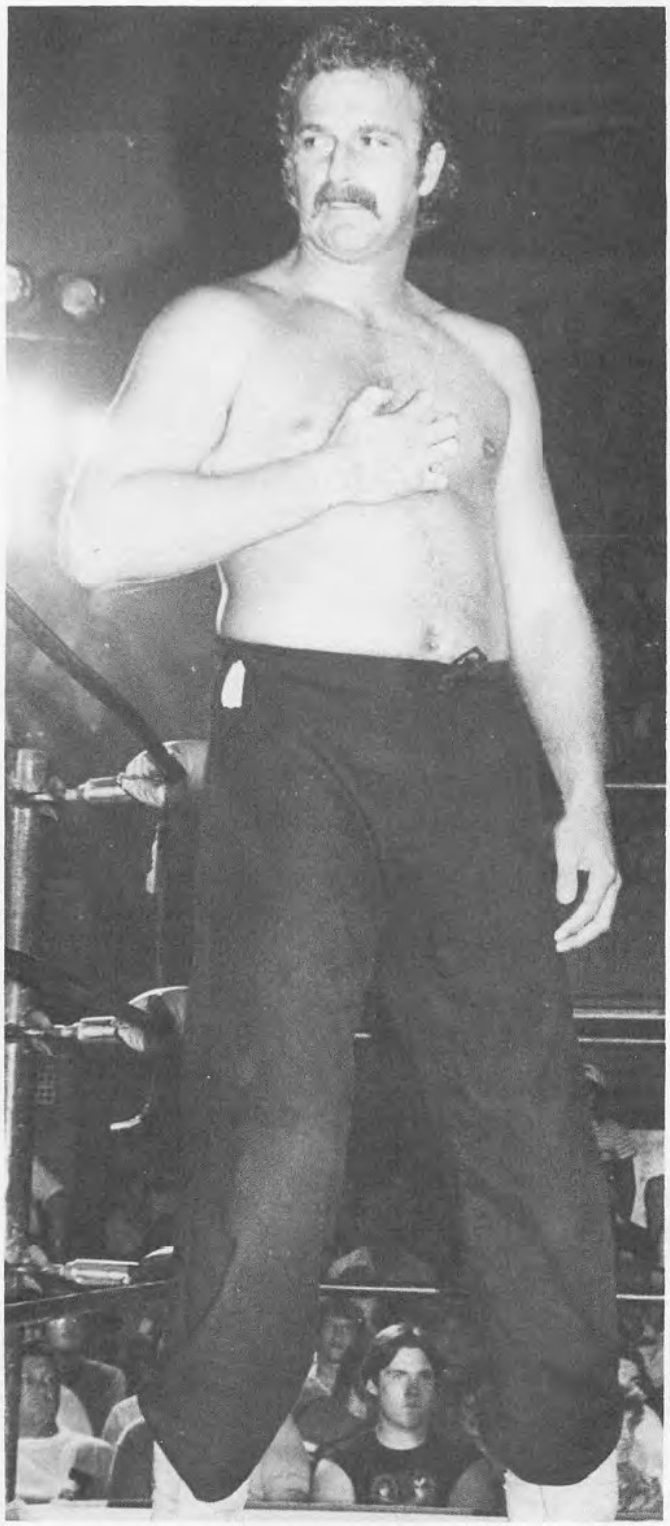
Kendall Windham has been exciting crowds in Florida with his fresh new style.



Jake "The Snake" Roberts is always ready for action when he steps into the ring.

being cheered. Recently, Reed held **Ric Flair** to a one hour draw in the New Orleans Superdome. With any kind of luck the muscular Reed could win the World's championship. . . .

The Fantastics, Bobby Fulton and **Tommy Rogers,** are hoping to win the Mid-South Tag-Team Title from the team of **Ted DiBiase** and **Steve "Dr. Death" Williams**. . . .

Jake "The Snake" Roberts is now a hero in Louisiana. . . .

Keep your eyes on **Ricky Vaughan.** The muscular Vaughan is a protege of **Billy Haynes,** and he's following in the footsteps of his good friend. Already Vaughan has held the Northwest Tag-Team Title, and now he has the Pacific Northwest Heavyweight Championship also. . . .

Buddy Rose is once again active in the Northwest. . . .

That's all for now. Look for us again next month! ■

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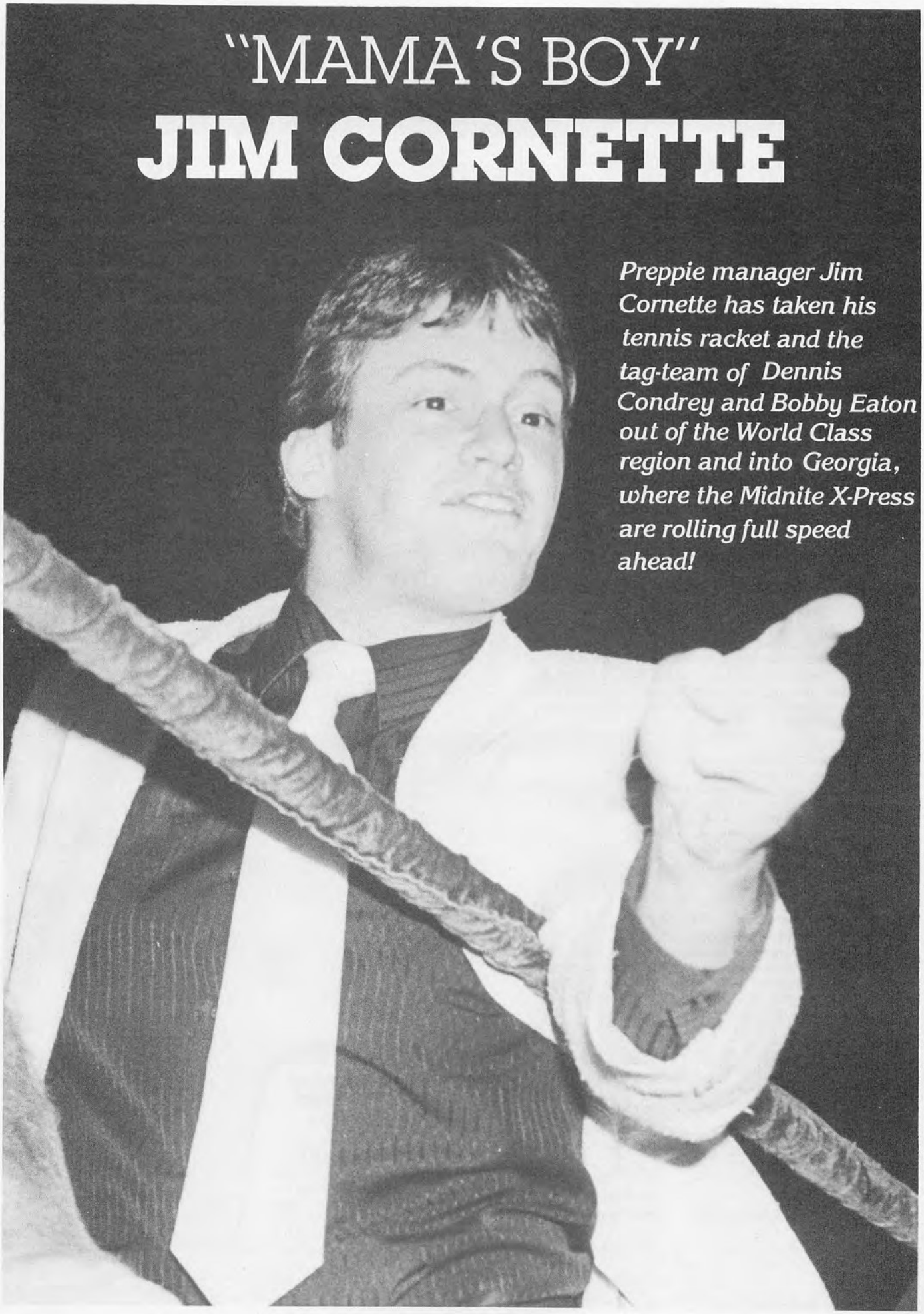
"MAMA'S BOY"
JIM CORNETTE



Preppie manager Jim Cornette has taken his tennis racket and the tag-team of Dennis Condrey and Bobby Eaton out of the World Class region and into Georgia, where the Midnite X-Press are rolling full speed ahead!

Photos by George Napolitano

AND THE MIDNITE X-PRESS
ROLL INTO GEORGIA!!

BY D.M. KIRKLAND

There are a lot of interesting individuals in Professional Wrestling—self proclaimed tough-guys like Ole and Arn Anderson, happy-go-lucky brawlers like Dusty Rhodes, and eccentric personalities like Jimmy Valiant or Abdullah the Butcher. The type most mothers wish their duaghters would bring home for dinner is rare in this rough-and-tumble sport. Which makes Jim Cornette's case even sadder. He *could* have been that kind of guy . . .

Not long ago, Cornette was tearing up the mat world in Tennessee, which didn't suit him (or his mother, we understand). Texas was the only civilized place in the South, which would understand his twisted genious. "Mother" bankrolled that move, and it turned out to be a disaster. Oh, his tag-team of Dennis Condrey and Bobby Eaton were good. They won titles. They won money. But dear little Jimmy was manhandled quite thoroughly, and is probably still mourning the loss of his green jacket to Cowboy Scott Casey, who evidently has no time for cry-babies.

To save face, Mr. "Preppie" Cornette, with his fancy clothes and smooth (if loud) manner of speech, landed in the "Big Peach," Atlanta, GA, with his sights (and Mother's) set on showing the wrestling world that Jim Cornette (known by fans and foes alike as "Wimp" or "Weasle") does indeed have a winning team in "Loverboy Dennis" and "Beautiful Bobby," the Midnite X-Press.

Jim Cornette and his infamous tennis racket pose with the Midnite X-Press, "Beautiful" Bobby Eaton (left) and "Loverboy" Dennis Condrey (right).

"Loverboy" Dennis Condrey is no newcomer to the mat wars, and has possibly broken enough rules in his many matches to have set some kind of record. "Beautiful" Bobby Eaton, not so long ago a successful young scientific wrestler, shows a similar style and, now, at least, a similar disregard for the rule book. Both men cash in on the "roughly stylish" look—Condrey, for one, is too old for punk styles, and Eaton is actually too good looking. At times their outfits mimic the Rock-n-Roll Express, at others, the Dirty White Boys. The most unfortunate thing about this tag-team is that they're not originals in any sense of the word. Blame *that* on Manager Cornette, as well.

They do have one thing going for them, however—they are sneaky and underhanded, and manage, with Cornette's help, to cheat their way to a victory more often than not. When they landed in Georgia, they wanted to

make an impression in a hurry. They did. They promptly ran afoul of Buzz and Brett Sawyer, in a feud that promises to keep Professional Wrestling on its toes for months to come.

It was one thing when they aided the Minnesota Wrecking Crew in an attack on "Mad Dog" Buzz Sawyer. Buzz has been around, and is no slouch in a scrap. He can take his licks with the best of them. But then the threats began against Brett, and the "Mad Dog" began to prowl his kennel in earnest. Brett can be pretty tough, too, Buzz admitted. But family is family. They ought to leave his little brother alone. Unfortunately, there is little "sportsmanship" or the good sense of "pride" in men like the Andersons and the Midnite X-Press—if they see that they can hurt someone, they'll do it just for the fun of it.

Dennis Condrey has left a long trail of broken bones behind him in his many years of violent rulebreaking.

Among the threats being hurled back and forth, the Sawyers signed a match with the Midnite X-Press for the Sports Arena at WTBS in Atlanta. As the television audience watched in horror, the Midnite X-Press, with an astonishing array of cheap shots, threw Buzz from the ring and began to double-team Brett, with the intention of putting the youngster out of the business altogether. They reckoned without Buzz's constitution, however. He was soon back in the ring, and had "Beautiful" Bobby up on the ropes, ready for the Suplex that would certainly end the match. As Sawyer came down, however, the dastardly Jim Cornette slipped his ever-present tennis racket underneath the falling "Mad Dog," thereby injuring his back. The Andersons came in then, and if it wasn't for the kind intervention of Terry Taylor and others, Buzz might have suffered worse than he did. As it was, for several weeks he wore bandages across his lower ribs in back. Amazing what a tennis racket can do . . . Or is it?

Hardly a week later, Jim Cornette was running on to Tony Schiavonni and Dave Crockett in his usual obnoxious manner when his hand slipped, and the "tennis racket" landed on the podium like a steel I-beam. The sound echoed throughout the TV studio as the announcers jumped in fright. Cornette himself looked shaken.

"Pretty cheap piece of furniture you've got there," Cornette said at last. "Surprised it hasn't collapsed already." Grabbing the tennis racket, he headed for the dressing room at a trot, leaving us to wonder if it was, indeed, "only" a tennis racket.

At last count, Cornette and his tenhis racket have figured in all the wins of the Midnite X-Press. Although Cornette maintains it's just "part of my image" and that "Mother" approves, it has been said that the NWA is seriously looking into the matter of whether the racket is loaded, or if it is, indeed, a tennis racket at all.

It could be said that the Midnite X-Press is chasing the Sawyers. It could be, that is, if the Sawyers were

running, which they aren't. Buzz, particularly, seems only too happy to catch up with the "Weasle" and his tag-team, any place from Atlanta to Michigan and back. And it wouldn't be a surprise to anyone if he were interested in catching up with Cornette's "Mother" as well, now that the bandages are off.

The Midnite X-Press is not the only team Jim Cornette has managed. Word is out that he might be interested in picking up some of his old contracts again—or sign up some new talent, if "Mother" agrees that they might be effective against men like the Sawyers. Meanwhile, Cornette continues to pull every dirty trick in the book to see that the Midnite X-Press comes out on top in the matches they sign, while being smart enough to keep them out of the way of men like the Koloffs. Look for him to leave the Sawyers to the Andersons, though, as he sets his sights on the World's Tag-Team Title held by the Rock-n-Roll Express. He'll have to chase them down—they're very busy men, but, given the opportunity, he and "Mother" will, no doubt, continue their "winning ways." ■

The glow in Bobby Eaton's eyes shows how much he enjoys inflicting pain on Bobby Fulton.

Jim Cornette says his mother approves of the dirty tactics used by the Midnite Express.

Wrestler Of The Month

SGT. SLAUGHTER AMERICA'S CHAMPION

It's been a long time since Sgt. Slaughter has worn a Championship Belt, but since disposing of Larry Zbyszko the Sarge is prepared to hold onto his cherished America's Title for a long time to come!

BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

The good Sarge has finally done it! After wrestling in the WWF for several years, Sergeant Slaughter joined *Pro Wrestling USA* in hopes of winning a major title, and his dream finally became a reality in Chicago when Slaughter defeated Larry Zbyszko to win the America's Belt. "That was a great day for me," Slaughter admitted. "I've been after a title for a long time, and now I finally have one. I should have won the WWF belt several years ago but then I was cheated out of it. Later the promoters refused to give me a match against Hulk Hogan and that really annoyed me. How can you prove you're the best when you can't wrestle for the title? Hulk Hogan is a good wrestler but I wanted a crack at him too. I was promised championship bouts when I joined *Pro Wrestling USA* and I've gotten them."

Actually, the Sarge has wrestled for both the America's Belt *and* the NWA World's Heavyweight Title. Sarge's NWA title bouts came in Philadelphia and in Baltimore. Although he came close, Sgt. Slaughter was unable to wrest the title away from Ric Flair in either bout. "I had the belt in my hand

A New Title for the Patriotic Hero!

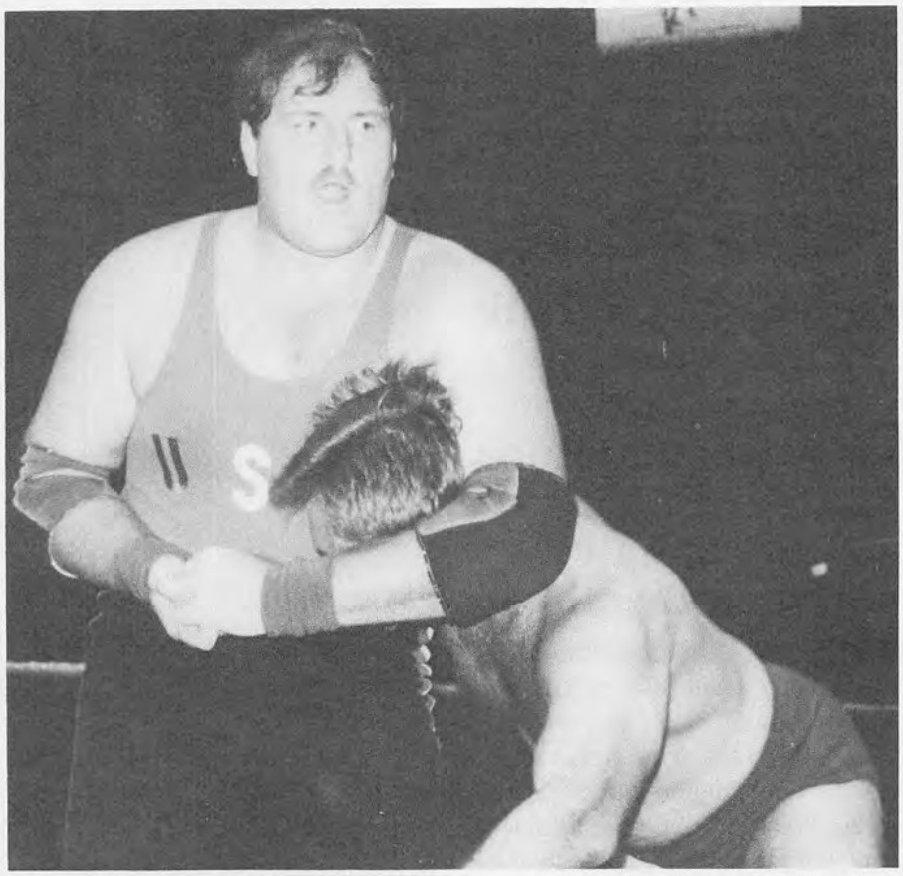
Photos by George Napolitano

Sgt. Slaughter gratefully accepts the America's Belt from Pro Wrestling USA *president and AWA legend Verne Gagne (above). The Sarge is in full command as he manhandles Larry Zbyszko in a Side Headlock (below).*

after the Balitmore match," Slaughter remarked, "but they took it away from me. If you ask me, I should have the belt today and I know Ric Flair has to feel the same way."

Their bout was marred by controversy. Due to the controversial ending of the match, and considering the fact that Sgt. Slaughter now has the America's Belt in his possession, the Sarge has been granted another NWA title bout. This bout will take place in the Meadowlands Arena. With the Sarge's stamina and experience coupled with the fantastic support of his army, it could turn out to be the Sarge's big day.

But the Sarge shouldn't look too far ahead. Former America's Champion Larry Zbyszko has vowed to regain his belt, and he too is a seasoned veteran. "The title was stolen from me," Zbyszko blared. "I was robbed in front of 10,000 in Chicago. Everyone knows I should still be champion and not that chump. He couldn't beat me fair and square so he had to cheat to win. But I'll get even if it's the last thing I do."



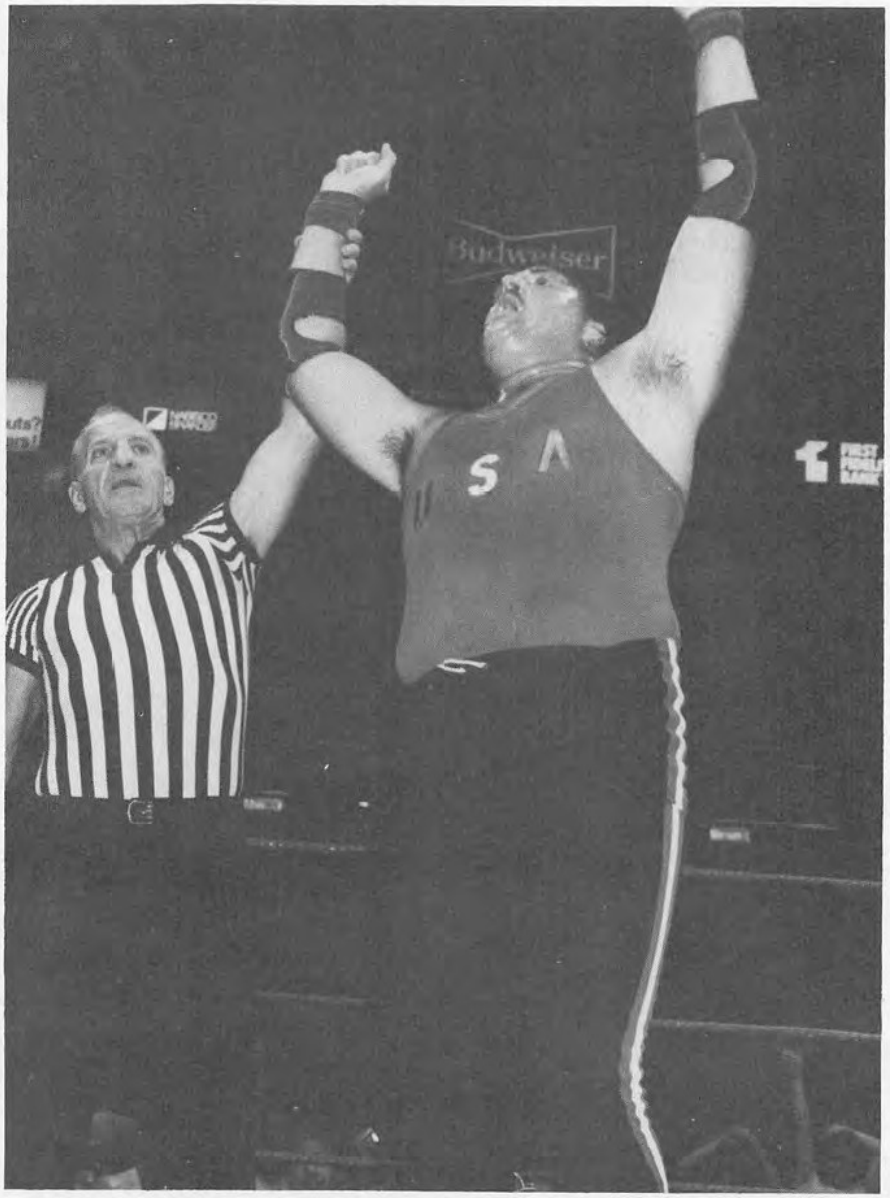
After listening to Zbyszko's belly-aching, the Sarge wasted no time in giving him a rematch. The bout was immediately signed as one of the feature attractions on the big Meadowland's Arena Extravanganza. The self

Sg. Slaughter can withstand a great deal of punishment during his matches, but when the battle's finally over it's the Sarge's hand that's raised in victory (below).

proclaimed "legend" tried everything in his power to regain his belt, but unfortunately nothing went right for Zbyszko. When the match was over Sgt. Slaughter was still the America's Champion. "He can cry all he wants to," Slaughter stated. "I'll give him as many chances as he wants, but it won't make any difference whatsoever because that bum will never win the title away from me."

SGT. SLAUGHTER: "I was promised championship bouts when I joined PRO WRESTLING USA and I've gotten them!"

It's good to see Sergeant Slaughter wearing a championship belt. He's worked long and hard to become a champion and now he's finally attained that lofty position. With the Sarge's skill and stamina it's going to be very hard to unseat him. ■



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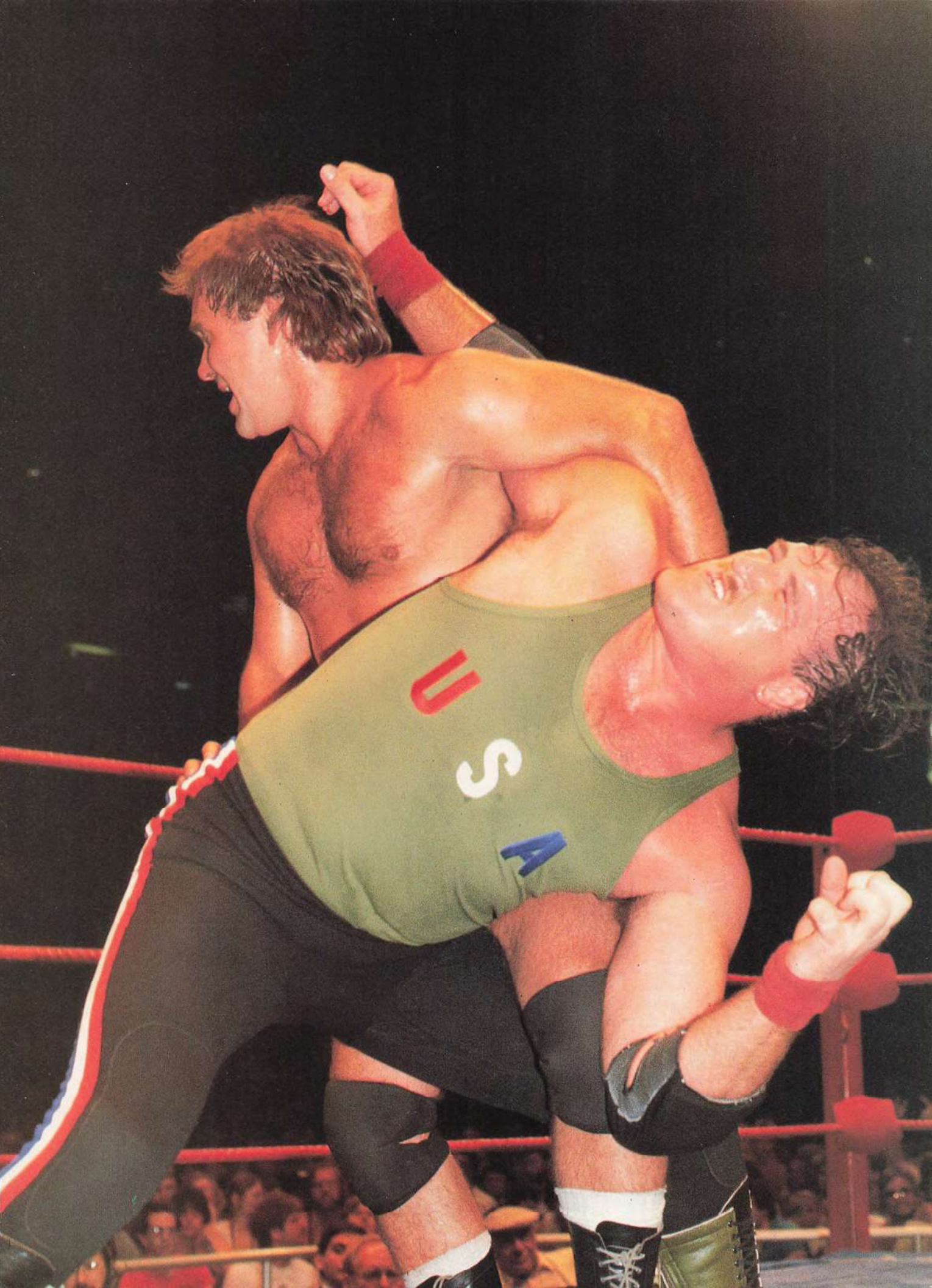
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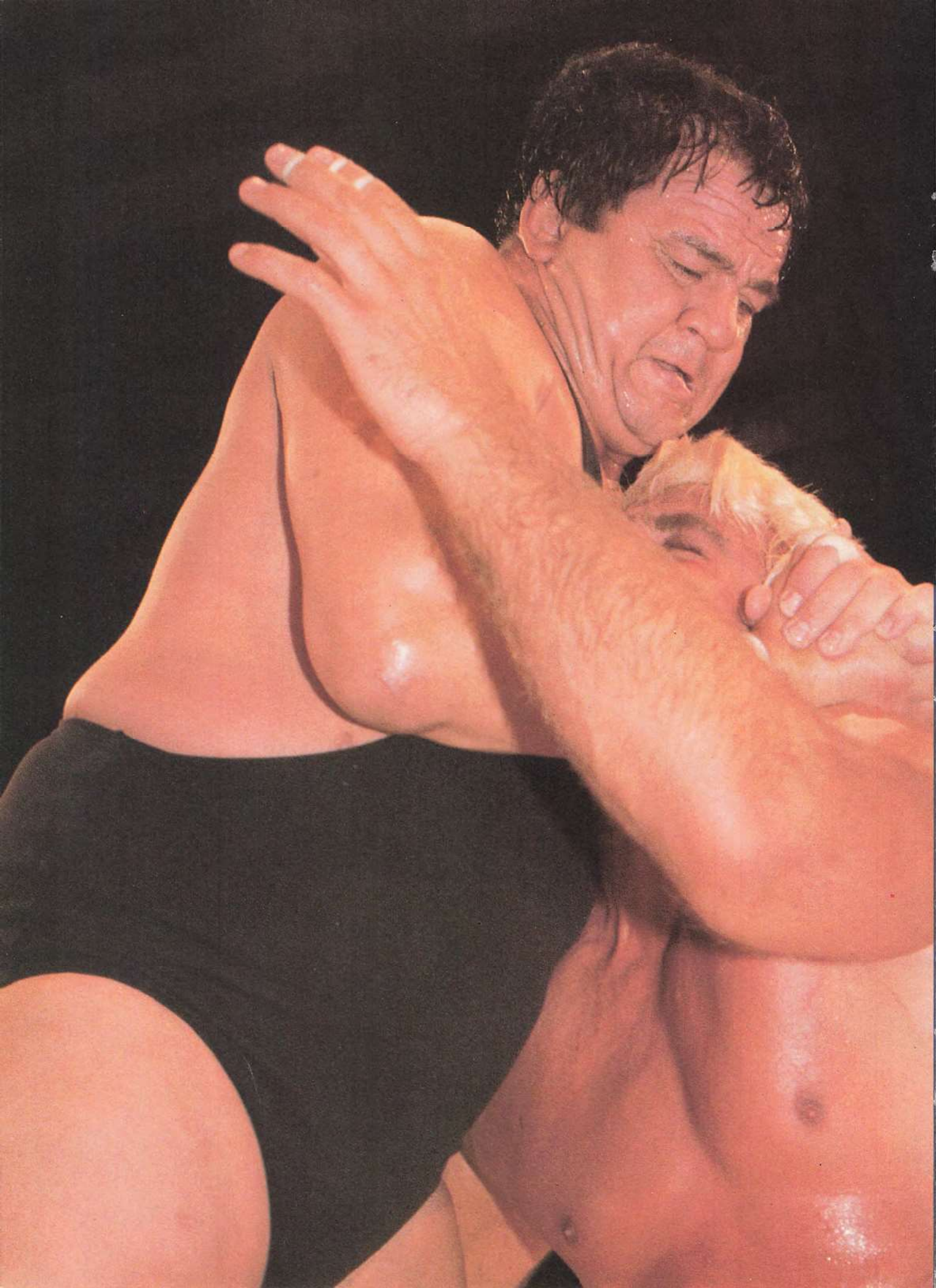
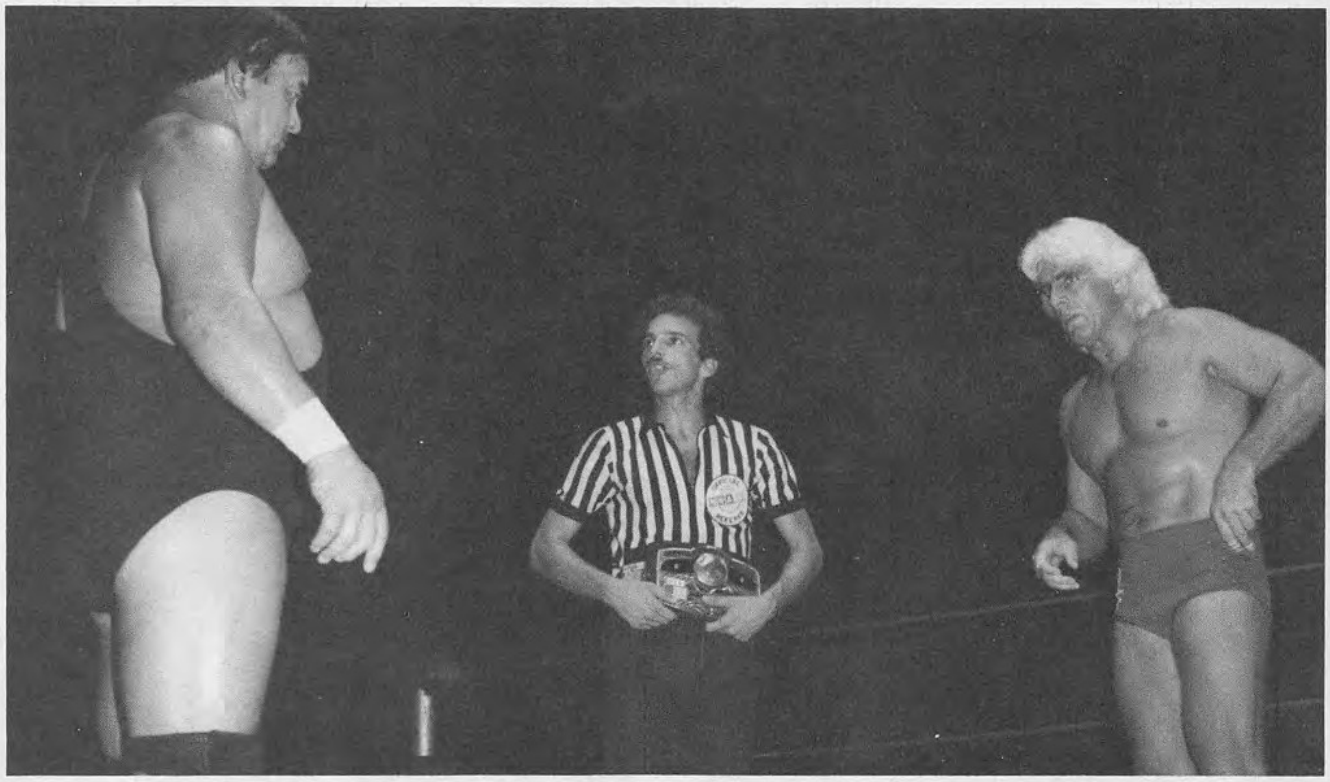


Orlando, Florida

WAHOO McDANIEL GOES FOR THE GOLD!

GIVING RIC FLAIR A RUN FOR HIS MONEY

Battle-scarred Wahoo McDaniel has had to fight his way through promoters and bounty hunters alike in order to get his shot at Ric Flair's World's Title—and now he's gunning for the gold with everything he's got!



Photos by Bill Otten

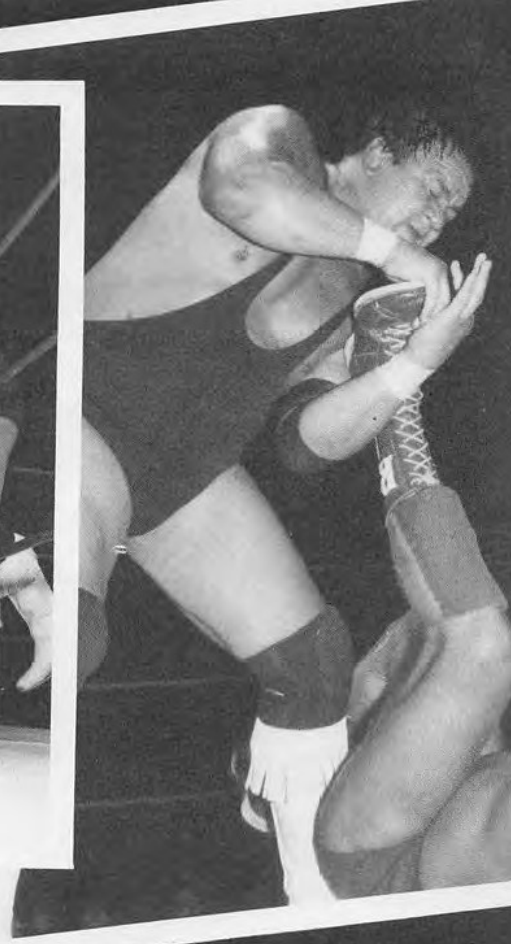
Wahoo McDaniel has been waiting patiently for his chance to lock horns with NWA World's Champion Ric Flair.

Indian Chief Wahoo McDaniel is a veteran of many years in the wrestling wars, but there's one prize he'd love to claim before he hangs up his head-dress, and that's the NWA World's Heavyweight Championship which belongs to Ric Flair. Although every aspiring young grappler cites the NWA "Band of Gold" as his ultimate goal, Wahoo feels he has a certain priority on the list of contenders. As the United States Champion in the Mid-Atlantic area, McDaniel was rated in the number one slot right behind Flair, but after losing the U.S. Belt to Magnum Terry Allen, Wahoo relocated to Florida where he has been clamoring for title matches louder than ever before.

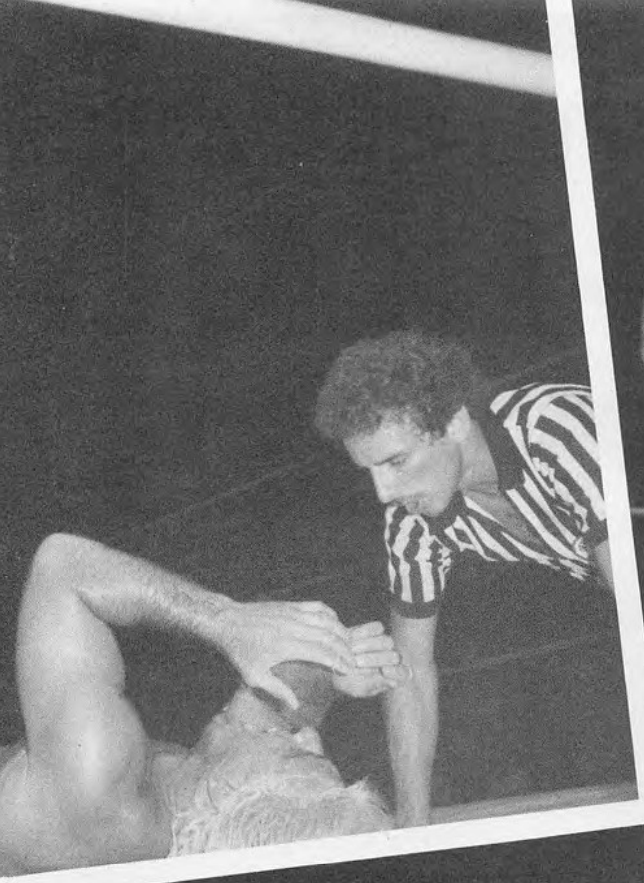
Ric Flair, on the other hand, would rather not be bothered. Considering his ever-lengthening list of scheduled title defenses, it's easy to understand why Flair wouldn't want to wrestle an ornery old Indian determined to have his scalp. Besides, Wahoo is already a co-holder of the United States Tag-Team Title, along with Billy Haynes, and Flair figures one title is more than enough for McDaniel.

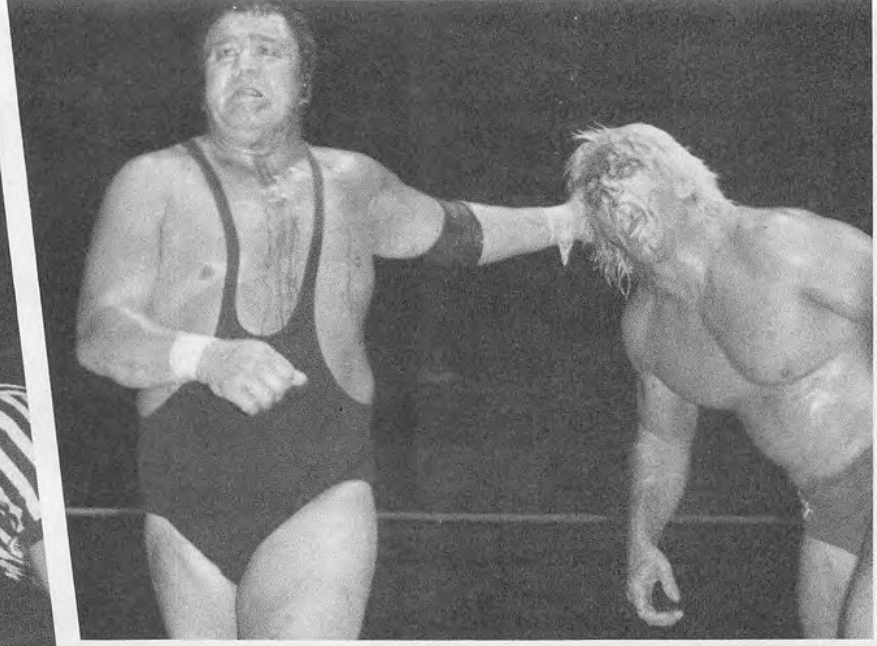
As a diversion, Ric Flair stalled Wahoo by placing an inflated price tag on his head, and sent his ace bounty hunter Abdullah the Butcher out to get Wahoo before he could get to Flair.

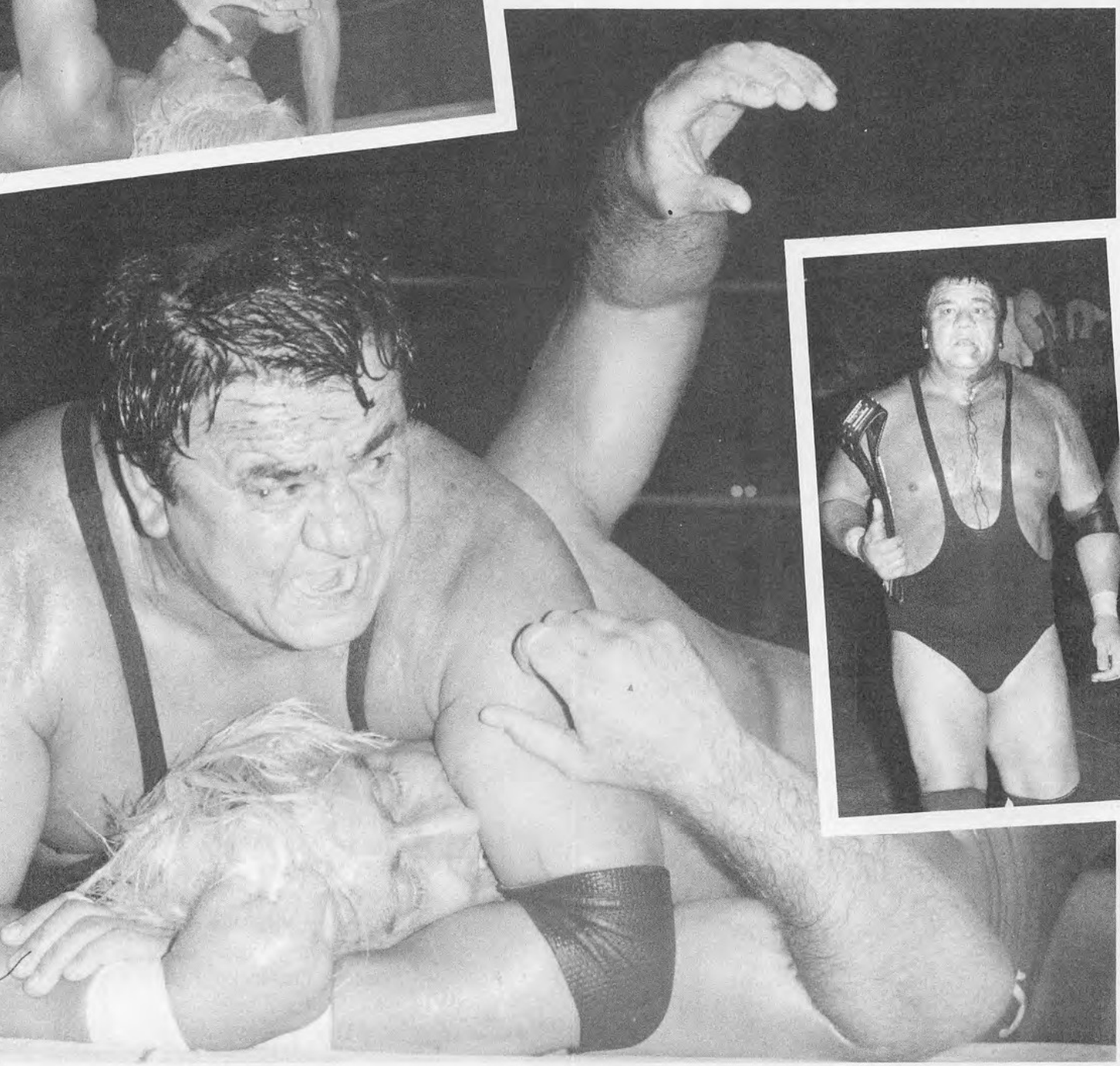
But Wahoo fought off Abdullah courageously, and could still see the NWA gold through the blood in his eyes. Finally, Flair had to break down and agree to a series of title matches with McDaniel. These photos, from one of the recent Florida matches between the two rivals, show both men striving for a clear-cut victory—but, as in the case of many of their other controversial matches, Ric Flair allowed himself to be disqualified, and thereby retained his title. You can bet that Wahoo wasn't too happy about letting the gold slip through his fingers, and rest assured that this angry Indian on the war-path won't be giving up so easily . . . ■ JEREMY TEPPER



Wahoo McDaniel lets Ric Flair know that he means business, by dominating much of his precious title match, and actually walking off with the belt after Flair disqualified himself by knocking down the referee—but, of course, Flair retains his "Ten Pounds of Gold."







THE UPSET OF THE YEAR!!

ROCK-N-ROLL EXPRESS

The Red Menace, Ivan and Nikita Koloff and Krusher Khruschev, had been terrorizing the NWA tag-team world with their brutal ring tactics. Along come the light and lively Rock-n-Roll Express. The Russians never gave them a chance, but Robert Gibson and Ricky Morton took everything they could get, including the NWA World's Tag-Team Title!

By GEORGE NAPOLITANO

For more than six months Ivan and Nikita Koloff, along with their comrade Krusher Khruschev created havoc throughout the wrestling world. Wherever they went the Red Menace simply barreled over everyone. No one was spared, as the Russians crippled everyone in their sight.

Enter the Rock-n-Roll Express, Ricky Morton and Robert Gibson. Physically, the Express were no match for the awesome Russians, but the Rock-n-Rollers certainly baffled the Ruskis with their tremendous wrestling ability. In their first match against the Russians the NWA World's Tag-Team Title at stake, the Express pulled the upset of the year when they defeated the Red Menace in a wild confrontation. When the smoke had cleared, the Rock-n-Rollers were the World's Champions.

"These belts mean a great deal to us," stated Robert Gibson. "We've

HOW THEY KRUSHED THE KOLOFFS AND KHRUSCHEV!!

Robert Gibson and Ricky Morton rock on to the World's Tag Title!

Photos by George Napolitano

Ivan Koloff and Krusher Khruschev look down their noses at the Rock-n-Roll Express, as they prepare to defend their belts against the determined underdogs.

held quite a few titles before, but the World's Title is what everyone is striving for. If you are the World's Champions it means that you are the best. Ricky and I have been striving for this position every since we joined forces, and now we've achieved it. We're going to do our best to hold on to these titles for a long, long time."

Robert Gibson and Ricky Morton originally joined forces while both were wrestling in the Mid-Southern area. Before getting together both Ricky and Robert were successful tag-team wrestlers, but they never expected that their chance meeting in Nashville would lead to the World's Title.

"I'll admit that when I first met Robert I didn't know if we would be able to work together," Ricky stated. "Hey, don't get the wrong idea. We'd been friends, a long time, but Robert had been wrestling with his brother so long that I wasn't sure if we could work together. But from our very first match it was as if we had been wrestling together our whole lives!"

Soon the phrase, the Rock-n-Roll Express was coined and Robert Gibson and Ricky Morton were on their way to the top. It didn't take long before the Express had captured the Tag-Team Title in the Mid-Southern area. From the Mid-Southern, the Rock-n-Rollers headed west to the Mid-South territory. There they collided with another "Express," the Midnite X-Press, and within a matter of weeks the Rock-n-Rollers had the Mid-South title in their possession.

"Wrestling in the Mid South was great," Robert Gibson added. "We faced quite a few tag-teams there and it really helped our teamwork tremendously." But the best was yet to come. After spending close to a year in the Mid-South, the Express headed to the Mid-Atlantic area where they encoun-

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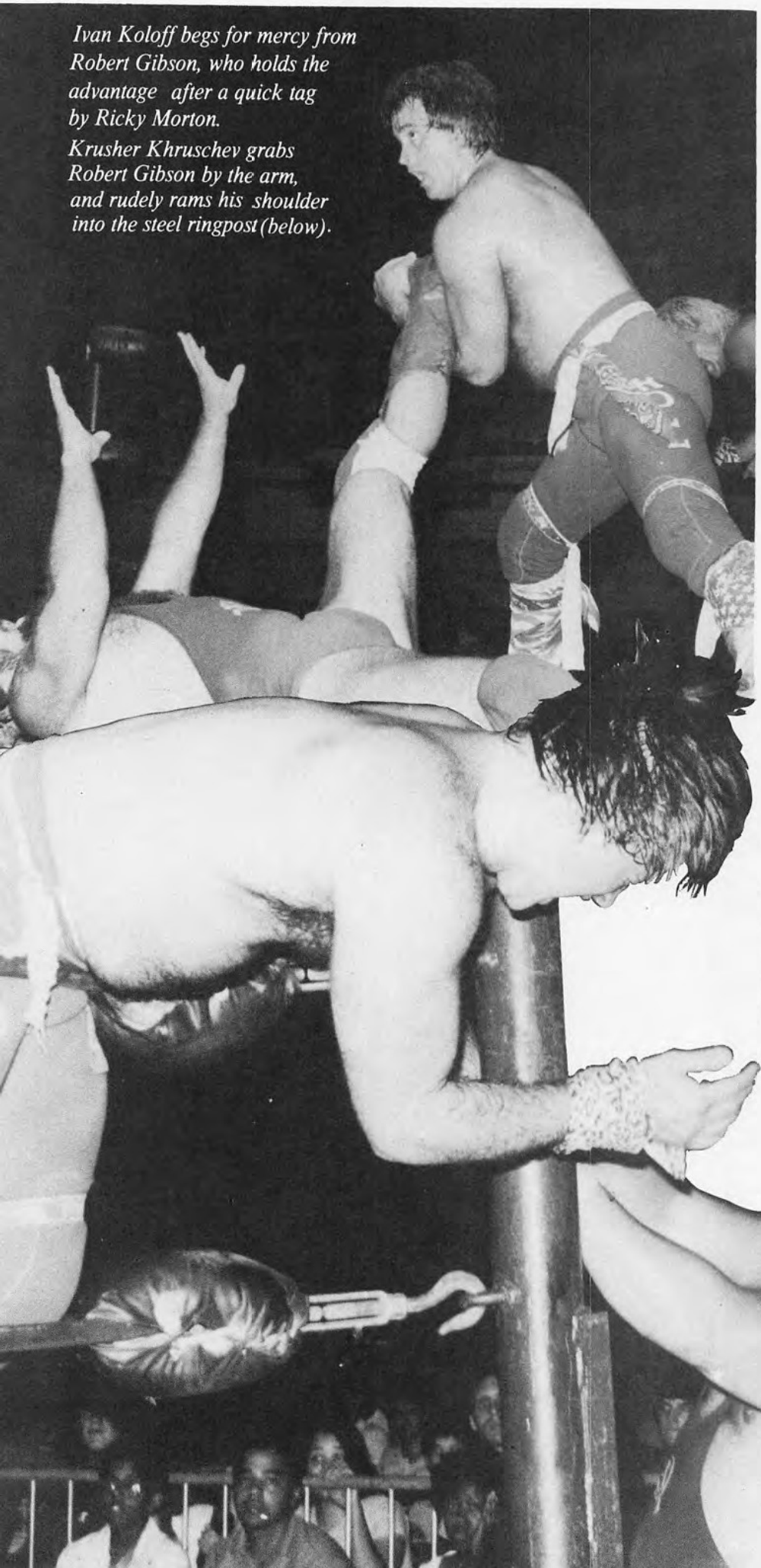
The Rock-n-Roll Express!



Ivan Koloff begs for mercy from Robert Gibson, who holds the advantage after a quick tag by Ricky Morton.

Krusher Khruschev grabs Robert Gibson by the arm, and rudely rams his shoulder into the steel ringpost (below).

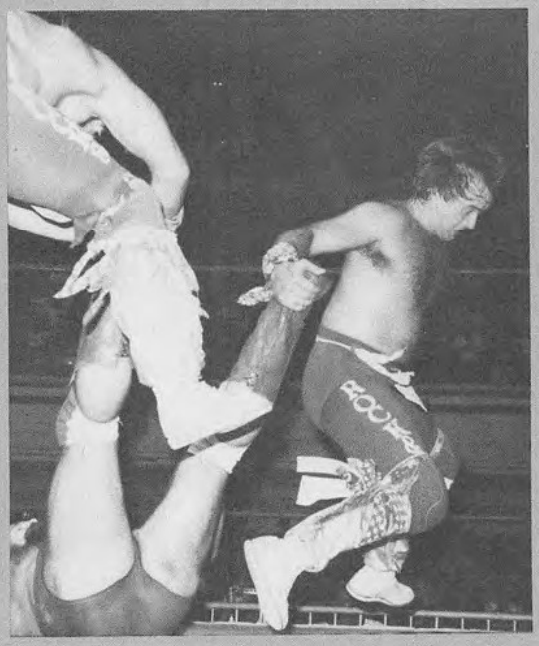
tered the Russians. The rest, they say, is history.

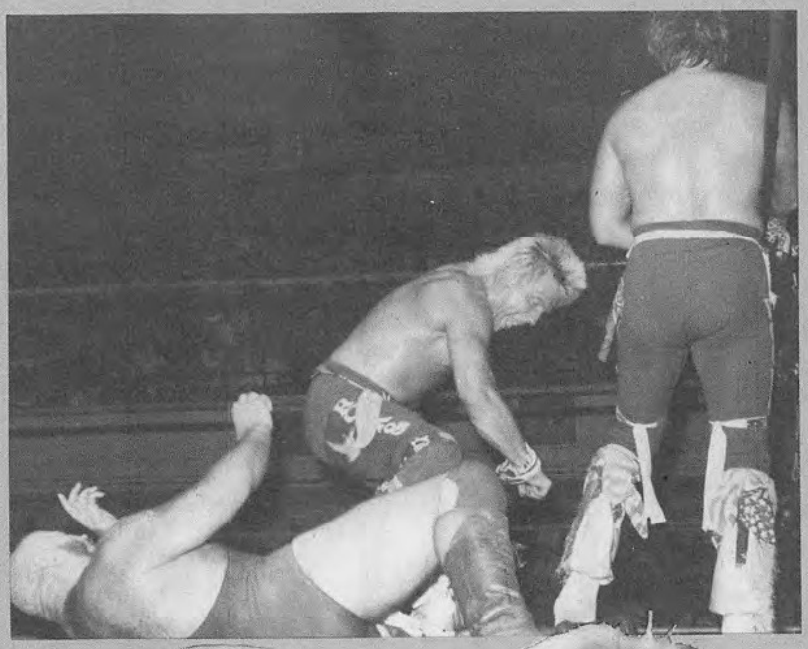
"The Russians are the toughest team that we've ever faced," Ricky admitted. "They're big, powerful, and tough, and they are tremendous wrestlers too. Robert and I went into the match expecting a war and we got one. The Russians, on the other hand, didn't know what to expect when they saw us. They figured we would be pushovers, and it was obvious that they took us a little too lightly. But we certainly showed them a thing or two. Didn't we?"

ROBERT GIBSON: "We've held quite a few titles before, but the World's Title is what everyone is striving for."

"That's right," Robert added. "We knew their strong points and their weak points, and we were determined to come out the winners."

Now that they have the World's Tag-Team Championship, the Rock-n-Roll Express are being pursued by the Russians, as well as their old nemesis', the Midnite X-Press. Both teams are determined to win the World's Tag-Team Championship from the R-n-R duo.





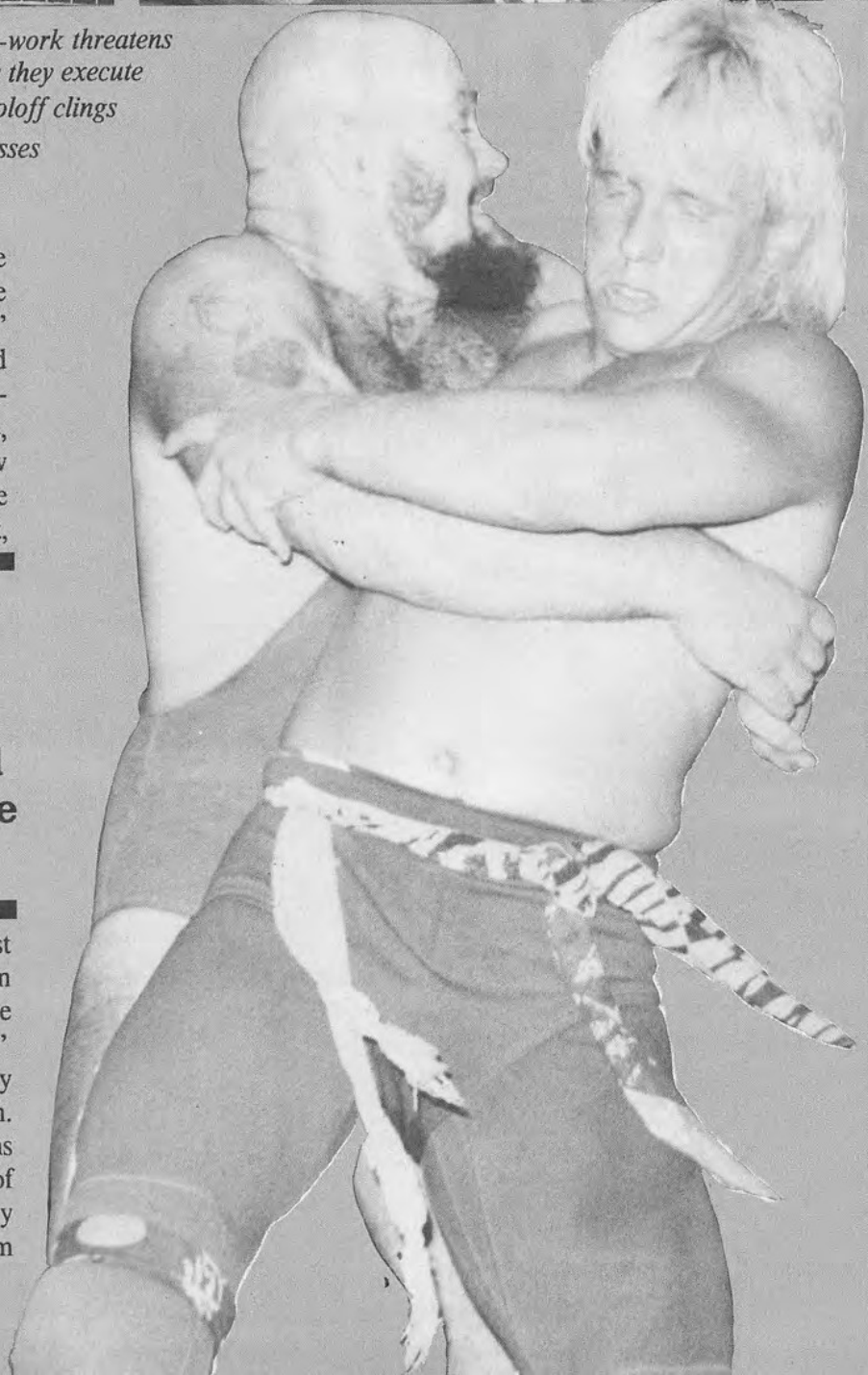
Ricky and Robert's split-second team-work threatens to rip Ivan Koloff limb from limb, as they execute a Double Leg Split(above). Ivan Koloff clings for dear life as Ricky Morton Hip-Tosses the Ruski to the mat-floor. (right).

"We know that we can't hold the belts forever, but it's gonna take one heck of a fight to get the titles from us," Robert vowed. "The Russians are wild and wicked, while the Midnite X-Press, with that wimp Jim Cornette, are low down and sneaky. We know that both are after our hides but we won't back down from anyone. In fact,

RICKY MORTON: "The Russians figured we would be pushovers, and they took us a little too lightly."

we'll put our titles on the line against anyone who wants to challenge us in that ring because we know that we are the best tag-team in the sport today!"

The Rock-n-Roll Express certainly are an excellent tag-team combination. Although there are several bigger teams in the sport, no one has the moves of the Rock-n-Roll Express. That's why they are the NWA World's Tag-Team Champions. ■



INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

"Macho Man" RANDY SAVAGE

HITS THE BIG TIME!

While all the top managers in the WWF are fawning over newcomer Randy Savage, the "Macho Man" has managed to cause quite a stir himself—while shooting for the biggest contract in wrestling history!

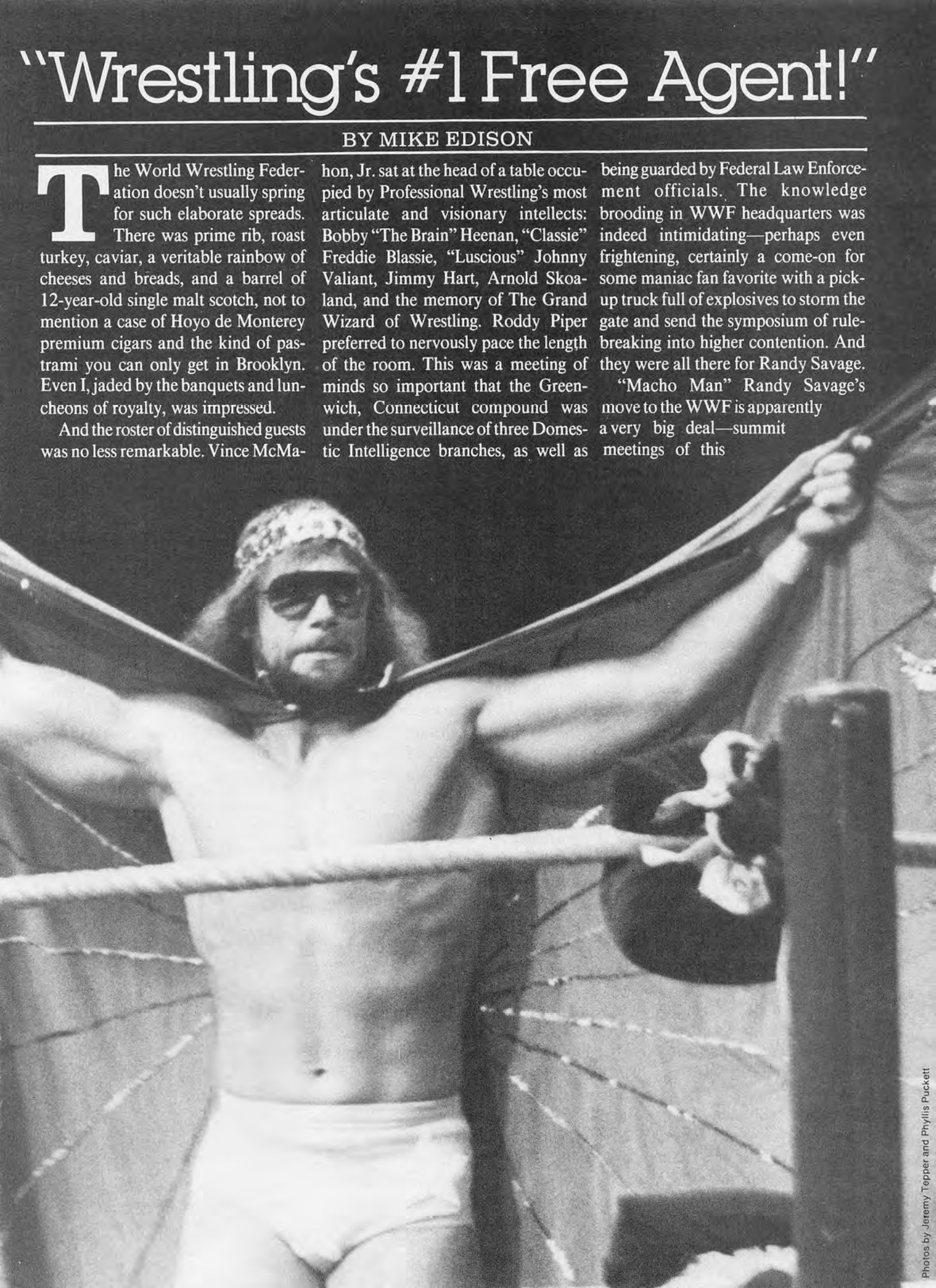
"Wrestling's #1 Free Agent!"

BY MIKE EDISON

The World Wrestling Federation doesn't usually spring for such elaborate spreads. There was prime rib, roast turkey, caviar, a veritable rainbow of cheeses and breads, and a barrel of 12-year-old single malt scotch, not to mention a case of Hoyo de Monterey premium cigars and the kind of pastrami you can only get in Brooklyn. Even I, jaded by the banquets and luncheons of royalty, was impressed.

And the roster of distinguished guests was no less remarkable. Vince McMahon, Jr. sat at the head of a table occupied by Professional Wrestling's most articulate and visionary intellects: Bobby "The Brain" Heenan, "Classie" Freddie Blassie, "Luscious" Johnny Valiant, Jimmy Hart, Arnold Skoaland, and the memory of The Grand Wizard of Wrestling. Roddy Piper preferred to nervously pace the length of the room. This was a meeting of minds so important that the Greenwich, Connecticut compound was under the surveillance of three Domestic Intelligence branches, as well as being guarded by Federal Law Enforcement officials. The knowledge brooding in WWF headquarters was indeed intimidating—perhaps even frightening, certainly a come-on for some maniac fan favorite with a pick-up truck full of explosives to storm the gate and send the symposium of rule-breaking into higher contention. And they were all there for Randy Savage.

"Macho Man" Randy Savage's move to the WWF is apparently a very big deal—summit meetings of this



Photos by Jeremy Tepper and Phyllis Puckett

magnitude aren't called for minor talents, and even veteran main-eventers don't get such superior antipasta at their press conferences. No, this kind of top-flight treatment is reserved only for Presidents, visiting dignitaries, and NWA Kingpin Ric Flair, which means that Randy Savage has something that no one else in the World Wrestling Federation has—a good chance of burning Hulk Hogan's paper championship. And every managerial force with a few sheckels wants to buy it.

As of press time, Mr. Savage remains wrestling's number one free agent. The press conference really told nothing, save for the lofty opinions those in-the-know hold of him. As is typical of WWF press conferences, there was more good food than information. Aside from a few random comments, the only thing the press-corps gained was the kind of food wrestling journalists can only afford to dream about.

"Don't you media geeks ever get fed?" Heenan asked me as I bullied myself closer to the buffet. "No wonder the boss doesn't go for these big spreads. Turns you ham'n'eggers into animals." I noticed that Mr. Heenan was entertaining a brilliantly constructed "Dagwood" of a sandwich, and we shared a good laugh. "Always gotta take advantage," he told me. I asked about Randy Savage.

"A fine young talent—certainly an asset to any stable. All of the men here feel the same way. He's being set up for a very lucrative contract. No question about it, pal, he's being groomed for a top slot in the organization. Even those jerks on the Championship Committee are impressed, but it's still gonna take some high quality managerial wrangling to get that MTV goofball Hogan to sign his name on the dotted line. First of all, he can barely write, and second of all, he's scared. That's why we're all here."

While the press and the managerial impressarios hub-bubbed around the food, Randy Savage remained conspicuous in his absence. Roddy Piper stayed away from the group, pacing frantically, and not even the most inebriated reporter would approach him. I thought I would try to get a comment from Jimmy Hart, after all, he knows Randy Savage pretty well. It wasn't too long ago that he led the "Macho Man" to the Mid-Southern Heavyweight Title, which might make Mr. Hart the most likely candidate to sign Savage. But there's just too much money involved (low-to-mid seven figures one colleague told me) to count on friendships or past professinal relationships. This is the big time.

Randy Savage takes a breather while beating yet another opponent senseless.

Before I got my chance to approach Hart, Randy Savage strutted in wearing a three-piece suit and one of the most extravagantly outrageous capes I have ever seen. All in attendance applauded.

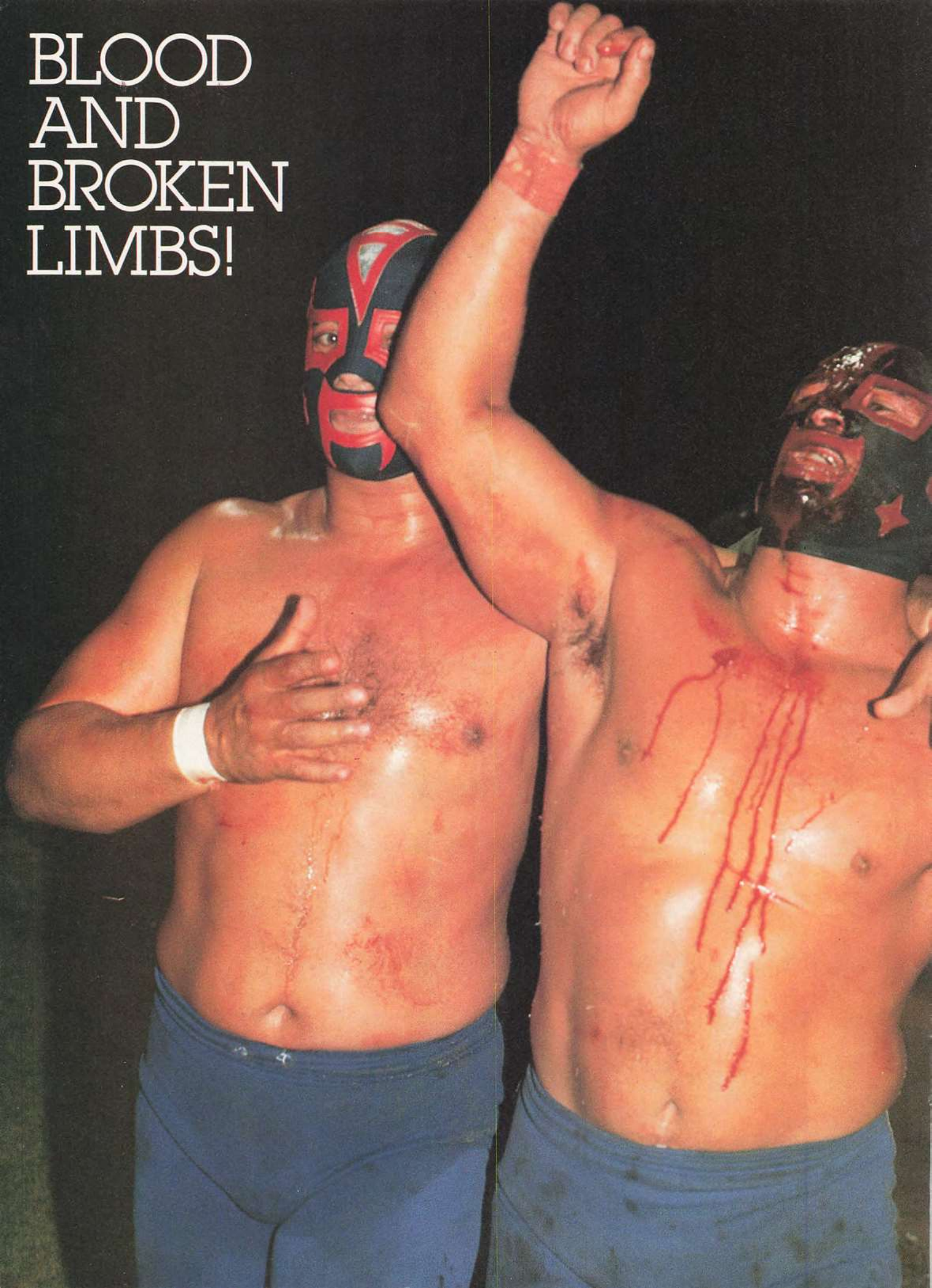
"The Macho Man (*garbled*) ... Hogan, HA-HA-HAAAA!!!" That's all I got out of Mr. Savage's brief but effective speech. It was gutteral and menacing, like attack dogs during a harvest moon. It sounded like darkness. And then he left, with wrestling's greatest minds at his heels. Mr. McMahon left next, smiling, followed by the bartenders and hostesses. Only a motley crew of reporters were left. I filled my pockets with cigars, tipped one more glass of scotch, and headed for the door. Why, I asked myself, hold such a lavish press conference if no one was going to spill any new information? So Randy Savage is in the WWF, I could've learned *that* watching Saturday morning TV.

Well, there's no question about it. This display of extravagance titillated and teased the manager's college as much as the press people, and Randy Savage is that much closer to signing one of the biggest contracts is grappling history. It would appear that Mr. Savage himself is a brilliant manager—he has successfully manipulated the media and the entire federation into thinking that he may be the rule-breaking messiah finally come to destroy the idol Hogan. And messiahs get top dollar. ■

Randy Savage prepares to deliver a Flying Elbow as the referee pleads for him to step down.

Color photo by George Napolitano

BLOOD AND BROKEN LIMBS!



PUERTO RICAN RING WARRIORS

THE INVADERS STRIKE BACK!!!

"We're gonna slaughter the Sheepherders!"

BY GEORGE NAPOLITANO

After being out of action with a broken arm for six months, Invader I had a score to settle with the New Zealand Sheepherders—and now Butch Miller is walking on crutches. Every time these two explosive tag-teams meet, somebody seems to gets hurt!

For six months the only thing on The Invader's (I) mind was to settle the score with the wild, crazy Kiwi Sheepherders. In January 1985, shortly after The Sheepherders invaded the Caribbean, the New Zealanders embarked upon a reign of terror. The boys from down under were not merely content with winning their bouts. Their goal was to maim their opponents. After injuring several preliminary wrestlers, The Sheepherders were matched against The Invaders. At the time The Invaders predicted that they would stop The Sheepherders' onslaught, but they were mistaken.

During their tag-team wars, The Sheepherders incapacitated Invader III, and then went to work on Number I. The New Zealanders constantly double-teamed the masked star and wouldn't let him move. After knocking Number I's head into the metal post, Luke Williams ran out of the ring and grabbed a New Zealand flag. As Butch Miller held The Invader, Luke Williams clobbered him across his arm with their flag pole. The masked man let out a scream that was heard in the remote corners of the arena. The man was really hurting, but the more The Invader screamed, the more Luke Williams pounded away. Finally, several wrestlers ran to The Invader's aid, but by then it was too late. The damage had already been done.

The Invader's arm was broken in three places and his hand had been fractured. Hearing this news, The Sheepherders were overjoyed. "That's

The Invaders have been patiently waiting to reap revenge on the Kiwi Sheepherders, and they're not about to waste the opportunity as Invaders I and III double up on Butch Miller.

Color photo by George Napolitano

Photos by George Napolitano

Invader III is literally wearing a "Crimson Mask" as he prepares to toss Luke Williams across the ring.

the best thing that ever happened to him," uttered Butch Miller. "Now he'll know better than dare mess with us."

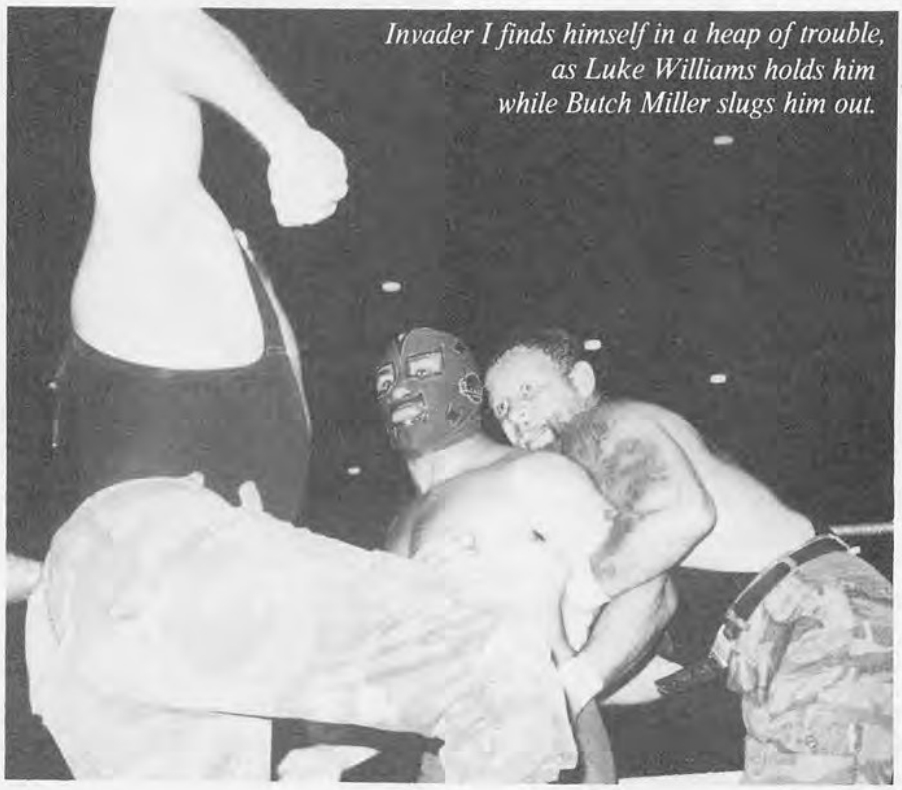
From the original prognosis, the Invader was expected to be out of action for six weeks at the most. But after six weeks the masked man was still in a cast. The six week injury turned into a six month ordeal. "While I was at home the only thing I thought about was The Sheepherders," The Invader admitted. "It got so bad that I used to wake up at night thinking about what they had done to me. I have been injured before, but never had I suffered an injury where I had been out of action for as long as this one. The thing that really annoyed me was that the arm did not respond to treatment, for four hours everyday I went for electro-shock treatments to try to fuse the bone together. Finally, it started to come around."

As The Invader nursed his injury, The Sheepherders continued their bloody assault. The Super Medic joined Invader III in hopes of getting revenge on the New Zealanders, but it was to no avail. It didn't take long before the Medic found himself on the injured list compliments of the Sheepherders.

Finally, Invader I couldn't stand the inactivity any longer. The moment he was able to move his hand without pain he petitioned Capital Sports Promotions to get him a bout against The Sheepherders. "This will not be an ordinary match," The Invader promised. "They will pay for the six months that I've been unable to earn my living. I won't be satisified until I've hurt both of them severely."

The stage was then set for the big grudge battle. On the night of the match The Sheepherder's manager, The Viking, vowed that The Invader would get hurt again. "He's been bragging that he's going to get even with us, but the man is mistaken. He won't cause us any problems at all!"

The Sheepherders were the first participants in the ring. The New Zealanders waved their flag while the partisan Puerto Rican crowd booed in disgust. Soon The Invaders appeared in view, proudly waving the Puerto Rican flag. The large crowd was now on their feet yelling and cheering wildly. The moment these two teams stood face to face in center ring pandemonium broke loose. Invader I immediately attacked Luke Williams while Invader III squared off against Butch Miller. The rule book was completely disregarded as both teams attempted to finish off the other. Finally, The Invader managed to herd Luke



Invader I finds himself in a heap of trouble, as Luke Williams holds him while Butch Miller slugs him out.

Williams out of the ring. With the crazy one out of the way for awhile, the masked man quickly went to work on Butch Miller. As Invader III held Miller's right leg, Number I jumped off the top rope and landed full force on his instep. Crack went Miller's ankle.

Luke Willaims made a vain attampt to come to his partner's aid, but as he climbed through the ropes Invader I booted him back out of the ring. The Invader quickly went back to work on Butch Miller. This time the masked man concentrated on Miller's knee. The New Zealander was in severe pain when Luke Williams was finally able to make it back into the ring. Wielding his flag, Williams knocked the masked man off of his partner, but it was too late. The Invaders had succeeded in injuring Butch Miller.

After the doctors diagnosed the injury, it was discovered that Miller's ankle was broken in two places and his knee was badly wrenched. Miller's ankle was placed in a cast and he had to stay off his feet for an indefinite period of time. The Invader meanwhile rejoiced. "He had it coming to him," the masked man stated. But we're not satisfied yet. There's still another Sheepherder to take care of."

For the next two months Butch Miller went for therapy on his injured ankle. Once the swelling had gone down and the bone healed The Sheepherders were back in action.

There's a trail of blood across the ring, as Invader III blindly crawls to the wrong corner in hopes of tagging out.

At the ballpark in Bayamon, P.R. these two teams collided once again. Their bout was another all out war. There wasn't a wrestling hold in evidence as The Sheepherders and The Invaders went all-out to finish off the others. This time, however, the bout was stopped by the referee before anyone was injured.

Their war, however, is far from over. Both teams have vowed to do what ever is necessary to drive the other out of the sport. With feelings such as these, someone is bound to get hurt seriously before this war is finally settled. ■

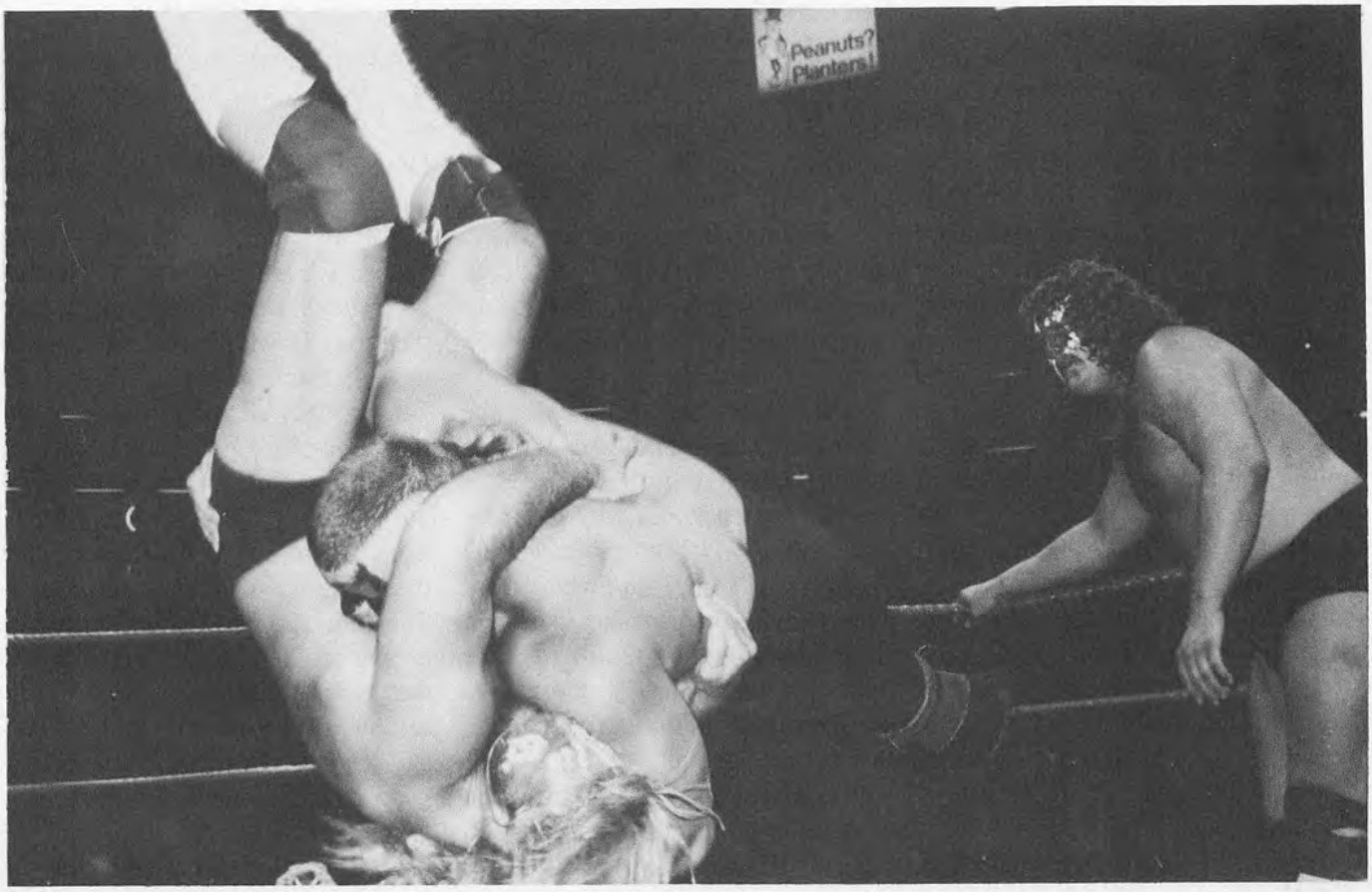
Invader III musters his last ounce of energy, as he wearily pins Luke Williams' shoulders to the mat.

Glorified Gang-War!

ROAD WARRIORS RUMBLE WITH THE FREEBIRDS!

Badstreet Meets The Southside of Chicago!!

The Fabulous Freebirds came to the AWA in search of titles, and that would include the Tag-Team Belts held by the Road Warriors—but since they've made the Warriors mad, someone's bound to get beat up along the way!



Photos by George Napolitano and Paul Heyman

The Freebird's imitation Road Warrior make-up doesn't intimidate Animal in the slightest, as he Bodyslams Michael Hayes before turning his attention to Terry Gordy.

Road Warrior Hawk and Terry Gordy scuffle in the Squared Circle as if they were in a street fight.

BY JEREMY TEPPER

The Road Warriors are mad, and who can blame them? Here it is an hour before they're set to take the ring in the Meadowlands, and they haven't had a chance to apply their trademark war paint yet. Why? Because huddled around the lone dressing room mirror, all three Freebirds are carefully painting their faces with the rebel stars and bars of their native Dixie.

"Will you look at those fool-hardy misfits," grumbles the Warrior's manager Precious Paul Ellering as he points a copy of the Wall Street Journal in the direction of the Freebirds, "trying to make a mockery out of the invincible Road Warriors! We'll teach those morons from *'Badstreet'* not to mess with the South Side of Chicago!!"

"That's right, Paul!" respond Hawk and Animal, two alumni of one of Chicago's toughest biker gangs. "We're ready for a good ol' fashioned street fight!!"

The Freebird's sentiments exactly, I'm sure. Michael Hayes, Terry "Bam Bam" Gordy, and Buddy Roberts know full well that tonight's match is going to be a brawl, but that's nothing new to them either. The Freebirds are always ready to brawl, it's just rare that they find anyone tough enough to stand up to them—and the Road Warriors don't back down from no one.

But you still have to question the wisdom of the Freebirds' strategy. The Road Warriors are always pumped up for their matches, but why get them pissed off as well? By mimicking the Warrior's make-up, the Freebirds are going to make them meaner than ever, and by wasting their time—well, the 'Birds are lucky the Warriors have learned to wait until they get into the ring to start fighting.

"I can't wait to get my paws on those grubby Freebirds," sneers Road Warrior Hawk from between his clenched teeth, "we're gonna beat the living daylights out of those dumb hicks . . . right, Animal?"

"HEY," howls the Animal on cue, "I've been waiting a long time to meet these Freebirds, and you know what? I DON'T LIKE THEM!! They think they're tough 'cause they're from *'Badstreet,'* well, I DON'T CARE!!" Then, almost as an afterthought, "And neither does Hawk!" On the opposite side of the room, Hawk punches out a locker in agreement, while across the hall Terry Gordy slips up on one of the stars criss-crossing his painted face.

The Freebirds aren't exactly cringing in fear, though. The three ruffians from Atlanta, GA are ready to put their money where their make up is. The 'Birds specialize in the same brand of ring brutality as the Warriors, and they're not about to play second fiddle to anyone. They came to the AWA and *Pro Wrestling USA* for one express purpose, and that's to win titles. Already AWA Champ Rick Martel has felt the fury of the Freebirds, when he got jumped by all three during a televised non-title match with "Fantasia" Michael Hayes. But the Freebirds are primarily

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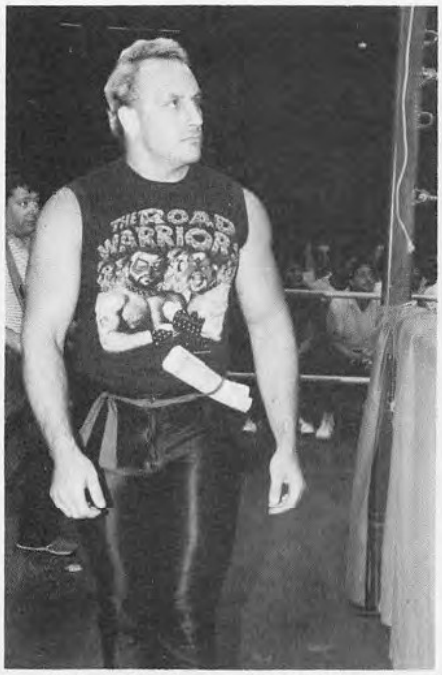

A freshly shaven Paul Ellering and third Freebird Buddy Roberts were supposed to remain outside the ring, but wound up getting in on the action anyhow (above), and soon the match turned into an uncontrollable six-man brawl which led to both teams' eventual disqualification (below).

a tag-team, and that makes their prime targets the Road Warriors.

After everyone got a chance to paint their face, and the two teams entered the ring, the Meadowlands could just as well have been a deserted parking lot or some urban schoolyard. The two teams, Hawk and Animal against Michael Hayes and Terry Gordy in this case, attacked each other with the wrath of two rival gangs, and the wrestling rulebook was left somewhere back in the locker rooms. With each team aided by an extra man on their side, the usual double-teaming tactics became blatant triple-teaming any time a man got caught in the wrong corner. After awhile the tags became totally meaningless as all six battled it out in the ring. With two men slugging away in each corner, Ellering made a typically ingenious call, and he, Hawk, and Animal, simultaneously tossed the Freebirds into the center of the ring where they all collided. After a series of Clothelines, the Road Warriors and their manager stood alone and triumphant in the Squared Circle.

Of course the bell had already sounded when all six men entered the ring, and the bout was ruled a double-disqualification. This feud is far from over, however, as, like any gang war, the grudges refuse to go away. After the match, promoters were already scrambling to arrange a six-man tag match for the next Meadowlands card, and it's doubtful that'll be the last word, either. ■

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EXCLUSIVE SCOOP!!

TERRY FUNK: IS HE SECRETLY WORKING WITH RODDY PIPER?

BY MIKE EDISON

WME's reporter on the beat has learned through unimpeachable sources that rough-n-tough Texan Terry Funk may be quietly working for Roddy Piper, and could be part of his plan to totally take over the WWF!

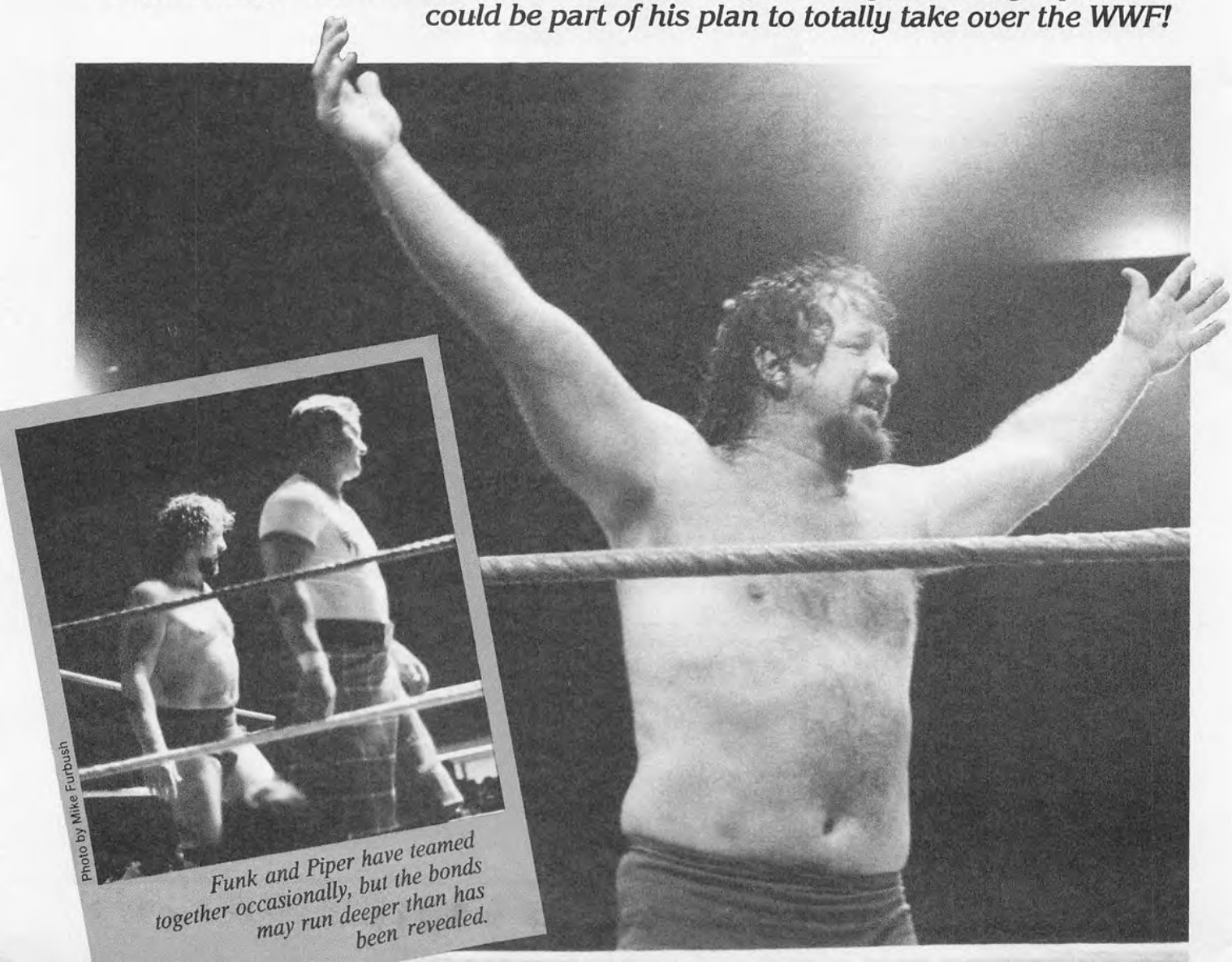


Photo by Mike Furbush

Funk and Piper have teamed together occasionally, but the bonds may run deeper than has been revealed.

Roddy Piper seems to have a thing about cowboys, and Terry Funk may be his new choice to fill "Ace" Orton's boots.

It was late Friday afternoon and time to go home when the office phone rang. "Wrestling's MAIN EVENT," I answered. I wouldn't have picked it up if I'd known it would cost me my weekend.

"Here's a scoop for ya, Edison," the voice told me, "Terry Funk is being being secretly managed by Roddy Piper. . . . Piper obtained his contract through some higher-up committee members, and he's using him, clandestinely of course, as an enforcer."

Despite the abundance of crank calls received at the WME offices, this bit of unsolicited information caught my interest. We were planning on doing a feature on Terry Funk's move to the World Wrestling Federation and I thought this might be a workable angle. I put the call on the speaker phone and let my editor listen too.

"Who," I asked with investigative assertiveness, "are you, and how do you know this?" I'm really a helluva reporter.

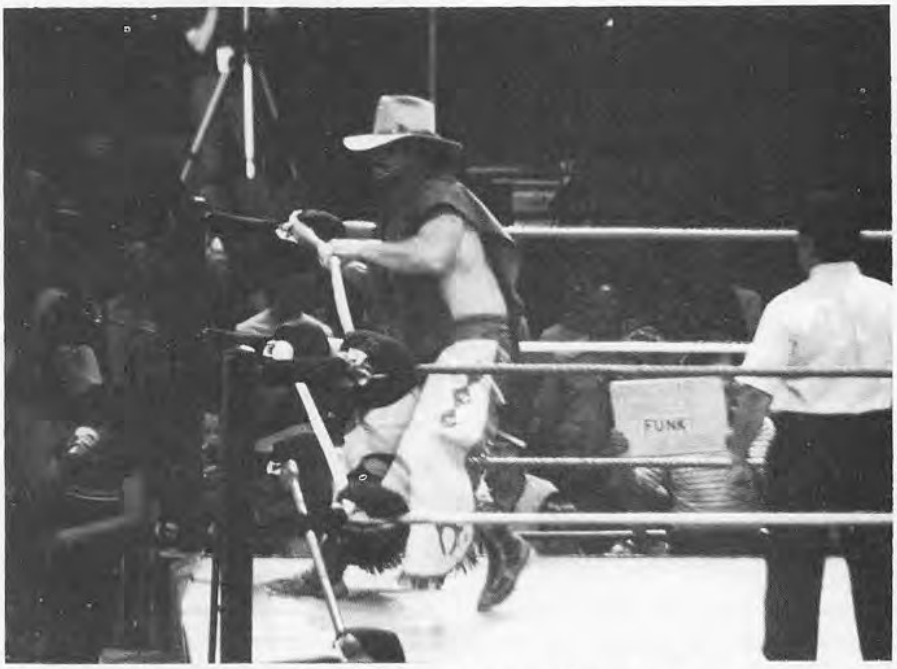
"You don't know me, but I owe you a favor . . . it's on the level. I can't really tell you much, but I hope you can use it. MAIN EVENT has always been jake with me."

I hung up the phone and looked over at my editor. "We're going to press Monday," he told me, "good luck."

Painful as it was, I called my roommate and told her not to wait up for me. Then I pulled out the file on Terry Funk. The next drawer down held a dirty tumbler and a dirty bottle of bourbon. I took a drink right from the bottle and set fire to a cigarette. The sun was already sinking behind New Jersey. I knew it was going to be a long weekend.

I tried calling the WWF insiders I knew, but everyone had already left for the weekend. I finally got a hold of a buddy of mine who knew the ropes and was willing to do some legwork for a few bucks. He told me he'd call if he found out anything. I took another drink and began reviewing the file.

The dossier on Terry Funk reads like some visionary Zane Grey epic penned with barbed wire. It was barbed wire, in fact, that Terry Funk used to carve his name into Dusty Rhodes' left arm, one of his most enduring contributions to Professional Wrestling, and these scars are only an earmark of the



Photos by Jeremy Tepper

Nobody belittles Terry Funk's chaps or Stetson when he enters the Squared Circle, as ring attendant Mel Phillips found out the hard way.

Funk Portfolio. Indeed, Terry Funk's credentials are intimidating.

Since coming to the WWF, Funk has displayed the kind of wrestling that earned him membership in the elite fraternity of NWA World's Champions. Originally from Amarillo, Texas, and a member of the world famous Funk family (father Dory, and brother Dory, Jr., who is also a former World's Champion, and is currently feuding with Carlos Colon for the NWA Universal Belt), Terry Funk is one of the toughest men in the business.

Currently, Funk and Roddy Piper are wrestling occasionally as what could become one of the greatest tag-teams of all time. Both of these men are gifted rulebreakers with impeccable wrestling vocabularies, and together they are a lethal post-scientific combo.

Funk and Piper have known each other for years, both having been an important presence on the NWA championship scene from the mid-seventies when Funk was World's Champ into the next decade when they were both top contenders for the same belt. And when Funk paid $10,000 for a replica of the NWA World's belt and henceforth claimed that he was the real champ (Ric Flair was enjoying his second title reign), Piper was one of the few people who supported his claim.

Soon after that, Piper left for the WWF and Funk, due to a trick knee, took a leave of absence from the ring and went on to Hollywood where he enjoyed moderate success as an actor and screenwriter.

The last item in the file was a WWF press release apologizing for Terry Funk's assault on ring attendant Mel Phillips, when Phillips put Funk's cowboy hat on. Funk proceeded to pummel Phillips with punches and kicks, while simultaneously Suplexing the preliminary bum he was wrestling for the TV audience. Then, as is his habit, he branded his unconcious opponent with a "XX" branding iron (Terry lives on the Double-X Ranch down in Amarillo). Funk refused to apologize, commenting that "only a Stetson man can wear a Stetson hat," so WWF President Jack Tunney apologized for him.

Terry Funk hoists Lanny Poffo on his shoulders and sets up a devastating Backbreaker.

It was the next morning and I was watching Terry Funk devastate some kid with a special type of Neckbreaker when the phone rang. A 360° Suplex, a Spinning Toe Hold, and the match was over. Andre the Giant came on to give an interview, so I turned off the sound and picked up the phone. It was my operative.

"It seems that Piper was instrumental in arranging for Funk to wrestle in the WWF," he offered. "Rumors have been flying around, but no one knows anything definite about an agreement between them. You know how Piper's

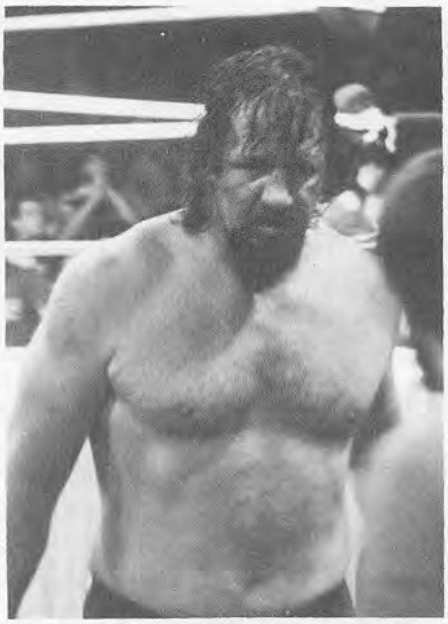
Terry Funk leaves his mark on Paul Roma, in the form of his "Double-X' brand.

Terry Funk climbs through the ropes after yet another convincing victory.

got a thing for cowboys, though." He laughed stupidly. "One thing's for sure," he added, "everybody upstairs at the WWF is scared of him. And even more so, the amount of respect they have for him is amazing. They know he's a real champion." I told him his check was in the mail and hung up.

I opened a new pack of smokes and pieced together what I knew. Piper and Funk have known each other for about 10 years, and Piper was instrumental in bringing him to the WWF. Recently, they have been working as a tag-team. Also, they got along just famously when Funk was on "Piper's Pit." There are rumors circulating that there is more of a connection than just a friendship, and it is important to remember that both Funk and Piper have lots of clout with the ol' Championship Committee. Ergo, the possibilities are endless.

Funk could have designs on making history. If he beat Hogan he would become the second man (Buddy Rogers was the first) to have held both the NWA and WWF Heavywieght Titles. Piper, no doubt, would be tickled pink to see Funk dethrone Hogan, or even Santana for that matter. In fact, Santana wouldn't stand a chance against a man like Terry Funk, and no doubt Roddy Piper can and will help him get title shots at Hogan's belt and Santana's Intercontinental Championship.



Terry Funk scowls at the WWF fans who don't recognize his championship form.

And then there is always the Funk/Piper tag-team. These are perhaps the two greatest wrestlers in the federation, and together they are a powerful force—even more intimidating than the Piper/Orton team. What will happen to Orton? Do Roddy and Terry have any plans on becoming Tag-Team Champions? And what about the rumor that Funk is Piper's clandestine enforcer? Perhaps Piper will use Funk to help collect the 25K riding on Paul Orndorff's head. Funk does have a reputation as a bounty hunter.

If the Piper/Funk connection pans out, I thought, it could be the shot in the arm the WWF needs. Men like that could restore some value to any of the WWF's championship belts, all of which are currently held by intolerable favorites. With that happy thought in mind, I drained the dirty bottle. Terry Funk, I reckoned, is a drinking man, too. ■

"THE NEW NATURE BOY" BUDDY LANDELL

WHO DOES HE THINK HE'S FOOLING?

Wrestling in the shadow of greatness, Buddy Landell will always have Ric Flair looking over his shoulder.

Photos by George Napolitano and Robert Reddick

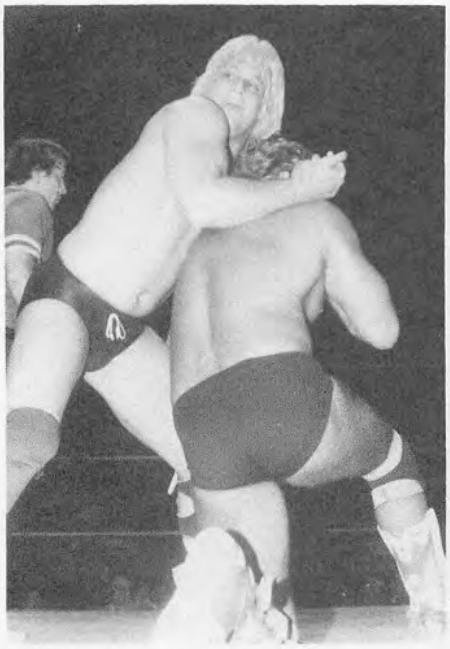
Under the brilliant guidance of manager J.J. Dillon, Buddy Landell has boldly embarked on a career as a Ric Flair impersonator. Wrestling can be a funny sport sometimes, but not everybody's laughing!

BY ART BURNS

Professional Wrestling is a funny sport, and one doesn't necessarily have to excel on his own merits. A good gimmick, some charisma, proper management—these things can all supercede superior grappling ability. Such is the case with Buddy Landell, "Nature Boy" Buddy Landell.

Buddy Landell is not a world class wrestler, he is an unranked contender, but he has already received a number of matches with the real "Nature Boy," NWA Kingpin Ric Flair, and he is enjoying what may be the most successful charade in wrestling history. Landell has a little charisma, a marvelous swivelling-hips elbow smash, brilliant management, and a great gimmick—under the charge of J.J. Dillon, Mr. Landell has launched a career as a Ric Flair impersonator.

As an imitation of the NWA World's Champion, Landell is only fair, somewhat more than Pat Boone doing "Tutti Frutti" and somewhat less than Bill Haley's "Shake, Rattle, and Roll." Much in the vein of an Elvis Presley impersonator, Landell can only hope to be a mere caricature of his selected target. He's gotten himself a $500 peroxide job. He's affected the "Lear Jet Sturt," and adopted Flair's signature Figure-Four Leglock. But the most arrogant element of his shameless imitation is his dogmatic insistence of being the "original Nature Boy." *[Of course the original "Nature Boy" is Buddy Rogers, the only man to have held both the NWA and WWF Championships. He was Flair's mentor and allegedly invented the Figure Four Leglock.—Ed.]* Landell's claim isn't just a bold-faced lie, though, it is an essay on *chutzpah,* a claim so outrage-

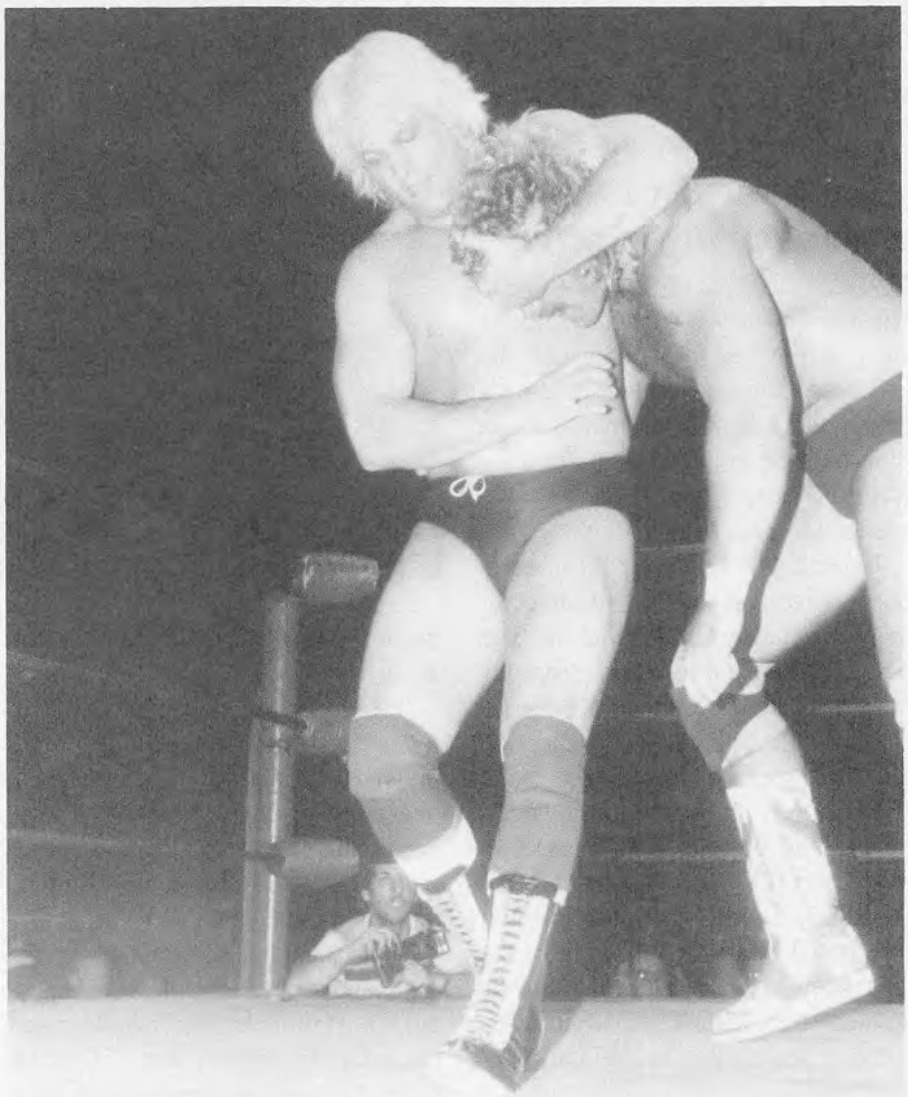


"Nature Boy" Buddy Landell displays an assortment of the Headlocks he's learned by copying the style of "Nature Boy" Ric Flair.

ous and blatantly wrong, it somehow captures the very essence of rulebreaking in its most entertaining light.

Ric Flair, however, isn't amused. "These minor talents are always trying to cover up their shortcomings with glib patter," Ric has said of Landell, but he is obviously irked. He has already given Landell a handful of shots at his precious "Ten Pounds of Gold," and it is very odd indeed, with all of the top-level competitors striving for a title shot that Ric would give a series of them to someone like Landell. It seems as if the charade has worked. Landell's chances of becoming the next World's Champion, however, are rather slim. He just hasn't got the experience or the raw ability to dethrone a man of Flair's caliber. This is not to say that these have been dull matches, though. In fact, there is something appealing about a "Battle of the Nature Boys." It is almost comical to see these men try to "out-strut" each other. And rarely have two wrestlers adopted such a similar style. But it is always obvious who is copying whom; no one does Ric Flair better than Ric Flair!

Landell has done well with his Nature Boy trip, though. He has gained title shots with Flair and former U.S. Champion Magnum T.A. much quicker than if he had tried to wrestle his way into contention. It is not surprising that a man as cunning as J.J. Dillon, "The Manager of Champions," is



behind him. While some fans are finding Landell's Flair impersonation amusing, most are appalled at the mockery they feel is being made of The Champ, and many experts feel that this is Dillon's act of *hubris,* and that it will blow up in his face. Already there has been a falling out between Dillon and his long-time associate, Ron Bass, which has resulted in distracting both Dillon and Landell from their quest for the World's Title.

Bass allegedly split with Dillon over a disagreement concerning the number of title shots Dillon has procured for Landell, considering that Bass has been a top ranked contender for almost a year now and has not received a single shot at the World's Title. This is unfortunate for Dillon. Bass is the superior wrestler and has a greater chance of wresting the belt from Flair, and the last thing Dillon needs now that he is getting title shots for his man is to get him involved in a feud that will draw from the extraordinary concentration needed to win a World's Title.

Buddy Landell tries to back off from an enraged Ron Bass, who unloads on the "Nature Boy." Bass and long-time manager J.J. Dillon have had a falling out over Dillon's partiality towards Landell.

"Buddy Landell is enjoying what may be the most successful charade in wrestling history."

I called Mr. Dillon at his Greensboro office for some random comments on Buddy Landell and the Bass situation, and his secretary promptly put me on hold. "Thus Spoke Zarustrutha (2001 Theme)" came shooting out of the receiver. It reminded me of Ric Flair—it's the same music he has on his hold button. After the second movement, Dillon picked up.

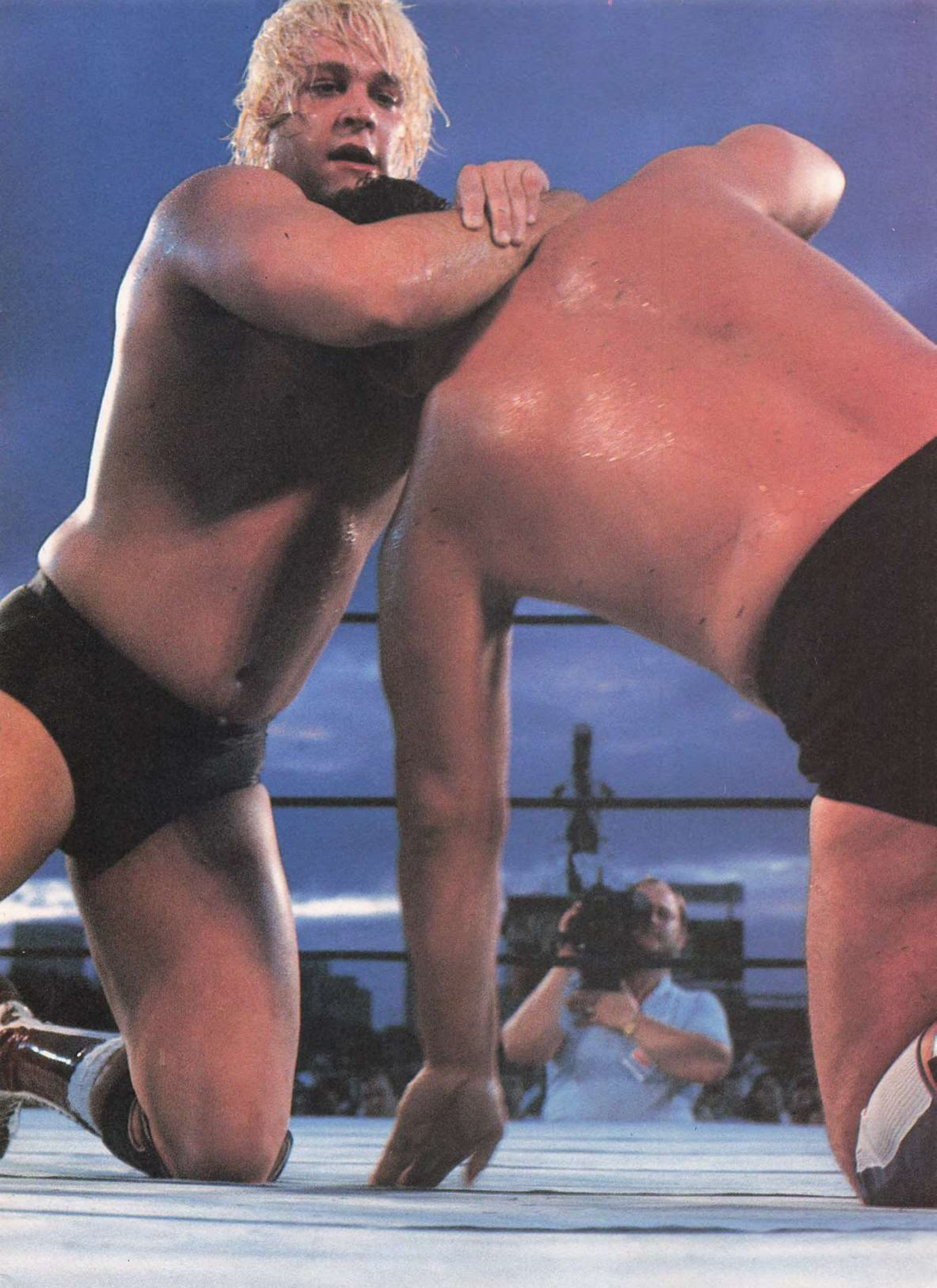
"Buddy Landell is the original Nature Boy," he insisted, "Flair got the idea from him. He stole it. And he learned the Figure-Four Leglock by copying Nature Boy Buddy Landell." This, of course, was pure hogwash. I suggested that there was some controversy surrounding Landell's claim, and Dillon put me back on hold. After the final movement of "Zarustrutha" he picked up again. I asked about Ron Bass.

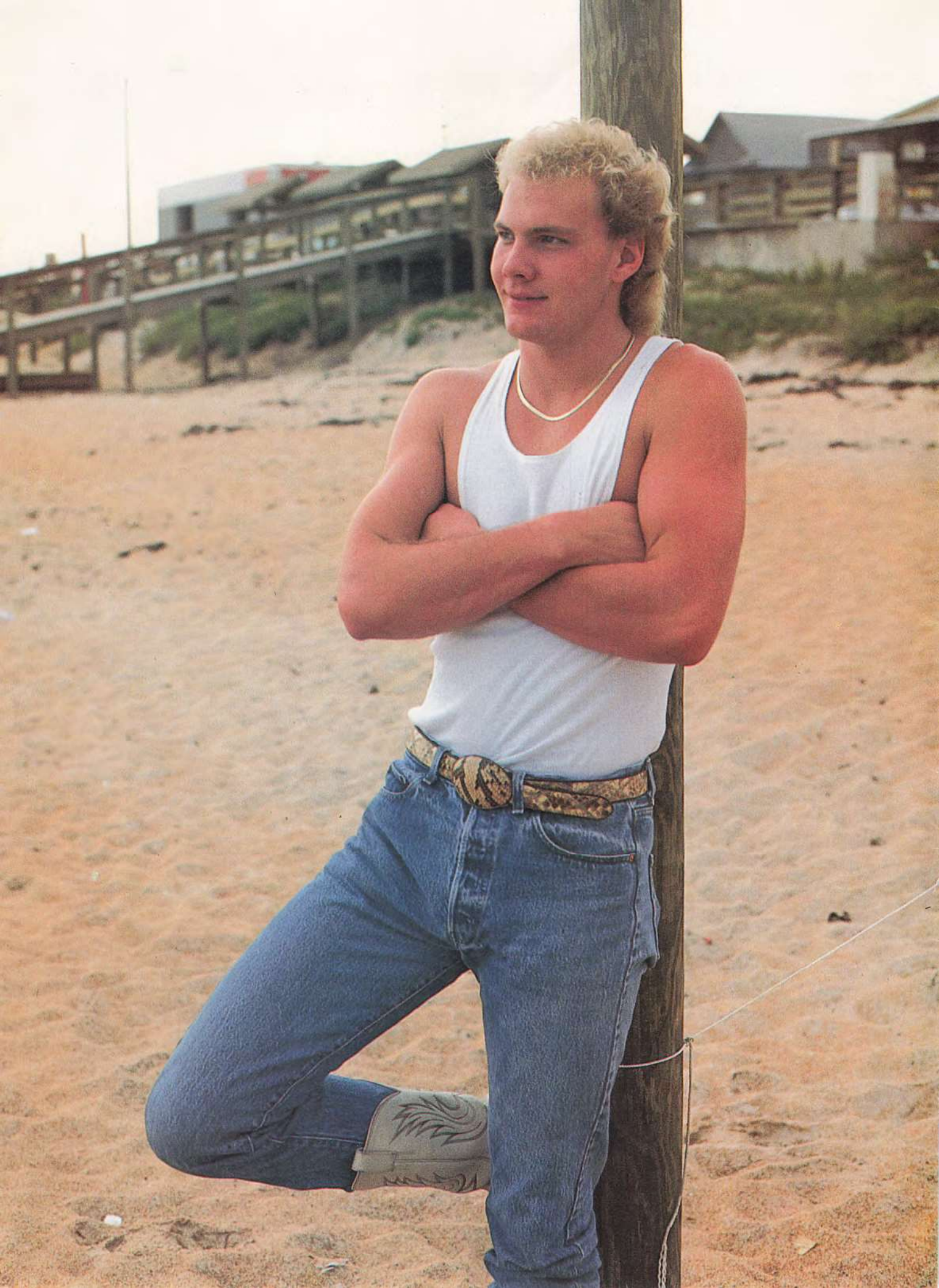
"Cowboys are flakey," Dillon offered. "It's from being in the sun too much. He was becoming dead weight, one thing a manager like myself doesn't need in his stable. So I liberated him." And then Mr. Dillon liberated me by terminating the call.

Unfortunately, Ron Bass was on the road and unavailable for comment, but I don't think his story would sound the same. More than Buddy Landell, he has certainly succeeded with more traditional wrestling and rule breaking techniques, and has climbed the ratings by virtue of his record. And Bass still poses a threat as one of the World Championship promotion's top contenders. Wrestling, however, is a funny sport, and one doesn't necessarily have to excel on their own merits.

But what's next for Buddy Landell? A joke that gets told too often ceases to be effective, and he can't taunt Flair forever—pretty soon he'll have to put up or shut up . . . or his act will be doomed to the Borscht Belt and *The Joe Franklin Show,* and a "Manager of Champions" doesn't need that in his stable, either. Indeed, wrestling is a funny sport, but Mr. Landell is going to have to wake up and realize that making fun of a real man and a real World's Champion is serious business. ■

Color photo by George Napolitano





OUT OF THE RING

An Interview With Barry's Younger Brother

KENDALL WINDHAM

Another Amazing Offspring of Blackjack Mulligan!

When Blackjack Mulligan first introduced his son Barry Windham to the wrestling world a few years back, nobody expected the lanky young athlete to become the superstar sex-symbol he is today. Likewise, it's hard to imagine what may lay in store for Barry's next of kin—namely, his younger brother Kendall Windham. Since going pro earlier this year, 19-year-old Kendall has been turning a lot of heads on the Florida mat scene, and nearly everyone agrees that the talented youngster is destined for greatness. WME's contributing editor Bill Otten got a chance to rap with Kendall recently, and asked him some of his impressions about turning pro. Here's a fesh look at a superstar of the future, straight from the horse's mouth!

WME: *You have recently decided to enter Professional Wrestling, as opposed to accepting college athletic scholarships. Were your father (Blackjack Mulligan) and your brother (Barry Windham) persuasive in that decision?*

Windham: Actually, both were really pushing me to go to college, rather than start wrestling right away. But wrestling is something I've wanted to do since I was about three years old, and I had the opportunity and the ability to do it at this time.

WME: *Do you think that being in a wrestling family influenced your decision at all?*

Windham: Of course my father had a lot to do with my love of wrestling—and I wanted to be just like my father. But I also enjoy the sport and competition of wrestling.

Photos by Bill Otten

Like the rest of his family, Kendall Windham enjoys the great outdoors, and especially the company of top-line horses.

WME: *How has the possibility of serious injuries swayed your decision to turn pro?*

Windham: Had I decided to go to college, it would have been on a full four-year athletic scholarship—probably for football. Football is a very physical sport which is notorious for destroying athletes before a career can be started. The risk of injury in football is just as great as it is in wrestling. By wrestling professionally, at least I would be getting paid for taking the risk and doing what I enjoy doing.

WME: *Do you think you'll ever regret not going to college?*

Windham: No. My plans have always been to become a wrestler. If I did go to college, I would turn pro right after graduating.

WME: *What kind of wrestling experience did you have before becoming a professional?*

Windham: In the summer before 10th grade I was enrolled in a wrestling camp. I joined my high school wrestling team, and won the state championship in the 155-lb. class. The following year we moved to Texas, and my high school didn't have a wrestling program. So I turned to boxing in my 11th and 12th grades, and won Golden Gloves both years.

WME: *When you turned pro, did your brother Barry help you prepare for the differences between amateur and Professional Wrestling?*

Windham: Yes, we both have always been serious about wrestling. Barry has helped a lot. We have been working out ever since we were kids by wrestling each other.

WME: *Does it bother you when people try to compare you and Barry?*

Windham: No, it doesn't bother me at all. It actually gives me an added incentive to better myself.

WME: *Do you think you and your brother will ever be a tag-team?*

Windham: I would enjoy teaming up with Barry. I'm sure we will someday.

WME: *Who were some of your wrestling idols as you were growing up?*

Windham: First of all, my dad, Blackjack Mulligan is my biggest idol. Others are Ric Flair and Harley Race.

WME: *What are some of your interests outside the ring?*

Windham: Well, training and working out to improve myself are very time consuming and important. In my free time I like fishing, boating, waterskiing, and riding horses and motorcycles.

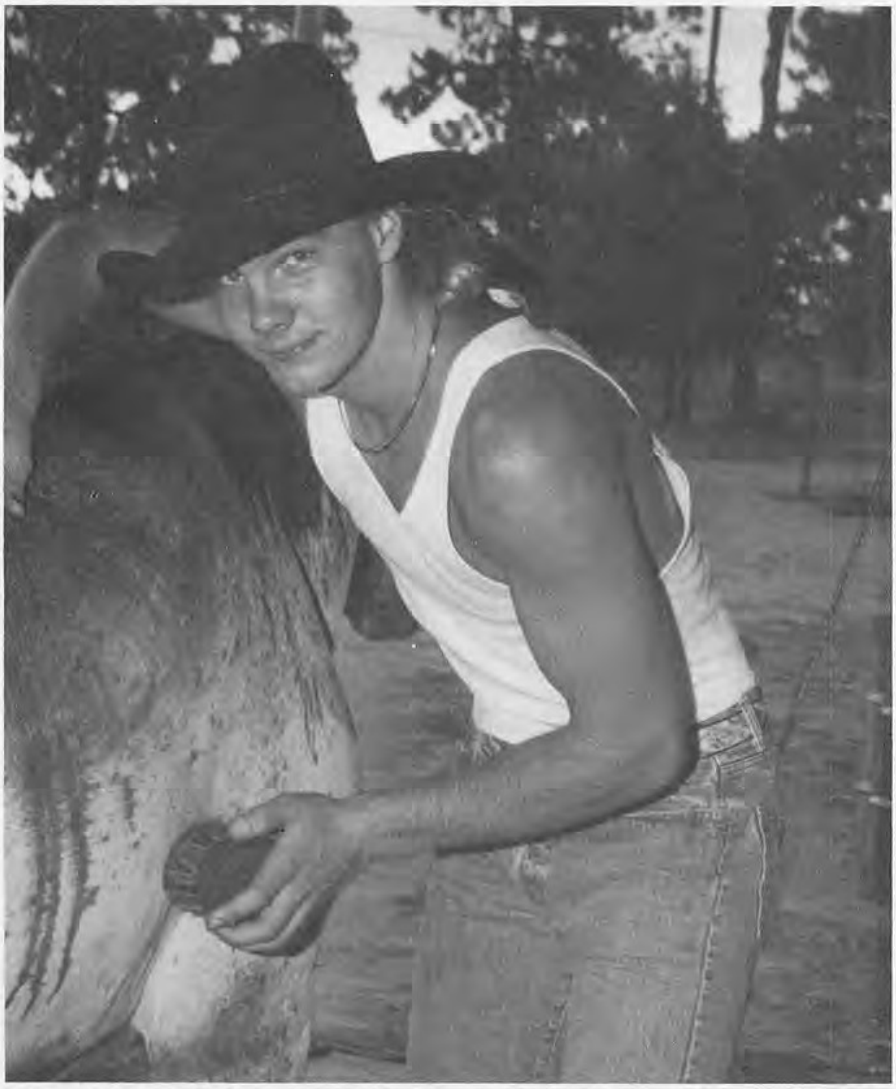
WME: *What is your goal as a Professional Wrestler?*

Windham: I hope to be World's Champion—NO—I *will* be World's Champion someday!

WME: *What is your long-term dream?*

Windham: Before you decide to become a Professional Wrestler, you already know that you won't be able to do it forever . . . your body just gets tired and worn down. My second love (the first being wrestling, of course), is horses. So, whenever the day comes to retire, I'd like to raise top-line horses on a couple-thousand acre ranch in Texas.

WME: *Thanks for your time, Kendall, WME certainly wishes you the best of luck on your new career!* ■



Kendall flashes the winning Windham smile. Someday, after he eventually retires from the mat-world, Kendall would like to raise horses full time.

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For some of us it would take years of saving to afford to travel to just one of these places. Most of us will never be able to go there ourselves. If we did go there, what would we see? Beautiful shrines and cathedrals. Hundreds – sometimes thousands – of local people praying for what they need. On the walls hang the proof of prayer. You would be infected with a holy spirit. You would feel the divine power of Mary and her Mother, Anne. Just as your own mother comforted you and made you feel the power of love and peace, you would feel the presence of something more powerful than you, and at the same time, loving and warm. You might be in the same spot where thousands of people actually saw the sun "dance" from place to place as if in joy. You might stare in awe at the place where a young girl, at the direction of the Holy Mother, dug in the dry sand with her hands – a spot where now 32,000 gallons of healing waters come forth every day. Or you might find yourself in a great cathedral next to a mighty river where sailors were saved from certain death by the hands of God over three hundred years ago – a place where thousands have had their prayer answered ever since.

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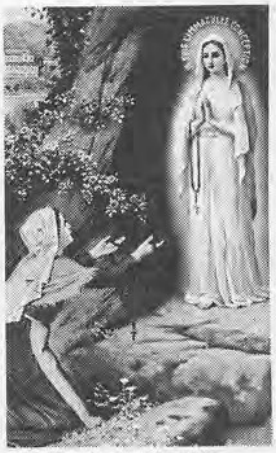

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World's Jr. Heavyweight Champion: DENNIS BROWN—220 lbs.—Honolulu, HA
United States Champion: TULLY BLANCHARD—235 lbs.—San Antonio, TX
National Champion: BLACK BART—265 lbs.—Pampa, TX
Universal Champion: CARLOS COLON—235 lbs.—Santa Isabella, Puerto Rico
Tag-Team Champions: ROCK-N-ROLL EXPRESS (combined)—455 lbs.

CONTENDERS

1. **TERRY ALLEN**—245 lbs.—Chesapeake, VA
2. **KERRY VON ERICH**—250 lbs.—Denton, TX
3. **NIKITA KOLOFF**—265 lbs.—Moscow, Russia
4. **BUTCH REED**—265 lbs.—Kansas City, MO
5. **WAHOO McDANIEL**—260 lbs.—Midland, TX
6. **BILLY HAYNES**—260 lbs.—Portland, OR
7. **ICEMAN PARSONS**—235 lbs.—St. Louis, MO—American Champion
8. **DUSTY RHODES**—302 lbs.—Austin, TX—Television Champion
9. **KEVIN VON ERICH**—240 lbs.—Denton, TX
10. **GINO HERNANDEZ**—235 lbs.—San Antonio, TX—Texas Champion

Rick Martel

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION (AWA)

Heavyweight Champion: RICK MARTEL—235 lbs.—Quebec City, Canada
Light-Heavyweight Champion: STEVE REGAL—220 lbs.—Ft. Lauderdale, FL
America's Champion: SGT. SLAUGHTER—300 lbs.—Parris Island, SC
Tag-Team Champions: ROAD WARRIORS (combined)—575 lbs.

CONTENDERS

1. **LARRY ZBYSZKO**—240 lbs.—Pittsburgh, PA
2. **MICHAEL HAYES**—245 lbs.—Atlanta, GA
3. **NICK BOCKWINKEL**—245 lbs.—Beverly Hills, CA
4. **GREG GAGNE**—225 lbs.—Robinsdale, MN
5. **TERRY GORDY**—255 lbs.—Atlanta, GA
6. **CRUSHER BLACKWELL**—475 lbs.—Stone Mountain, GA
7. **BOB BACKLUND**—240 lbs.—Princeton, MN
8. **BARON VON RASCHKE**—250 lbs.—Berlin, Germany
9. **BRAD RHEINGANS**—235 lbs.—Appleton, MN
10. **RAY STEVENS**—240 lbs.—San Francisco, CA

Hulk Hogan

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION (WWF)

Heavyweight Champion: HULK HOGAN—299 lbs.—Venice Beach, CA
Jr. Heavyweight Champion: LES THORNTON—225 lbs.—Manchester, England
Intercontinental Champion: TITO SANTANA—235 lbs.—Tocula, Mexico
Ladies Champion: WENDI RICHTER—150 lbs.—Dallas, TX
Tag-Team Champions: BARRY WINDHAM AND MIKE ROTUNDO (combined)—475 lbs.

CONTENDERS

1. **RODDY PIPER**—235 lbs.—Glasgow, Scotland
2. **TERRY FUNK**—250 lbs.—Amarillo, TX
3. **RANDY SAVAGE**—245 lbs.—Pensacola, FL
4. **GREG VALENTINE**—250 lbs.—Seattle, WA
5. **BRUTUS BEEFCAKE**—240 lbs.—San Francisco, CA
6. **PAUL ORNDORFF**—240 lbs.—Tampa, FL
7. **RICKY STEAMBOAT**—235 lbs.—Honolulu, HA
8. **MAGNIFICENT MURACO**—260 lbs.—Sunset Beach, HA
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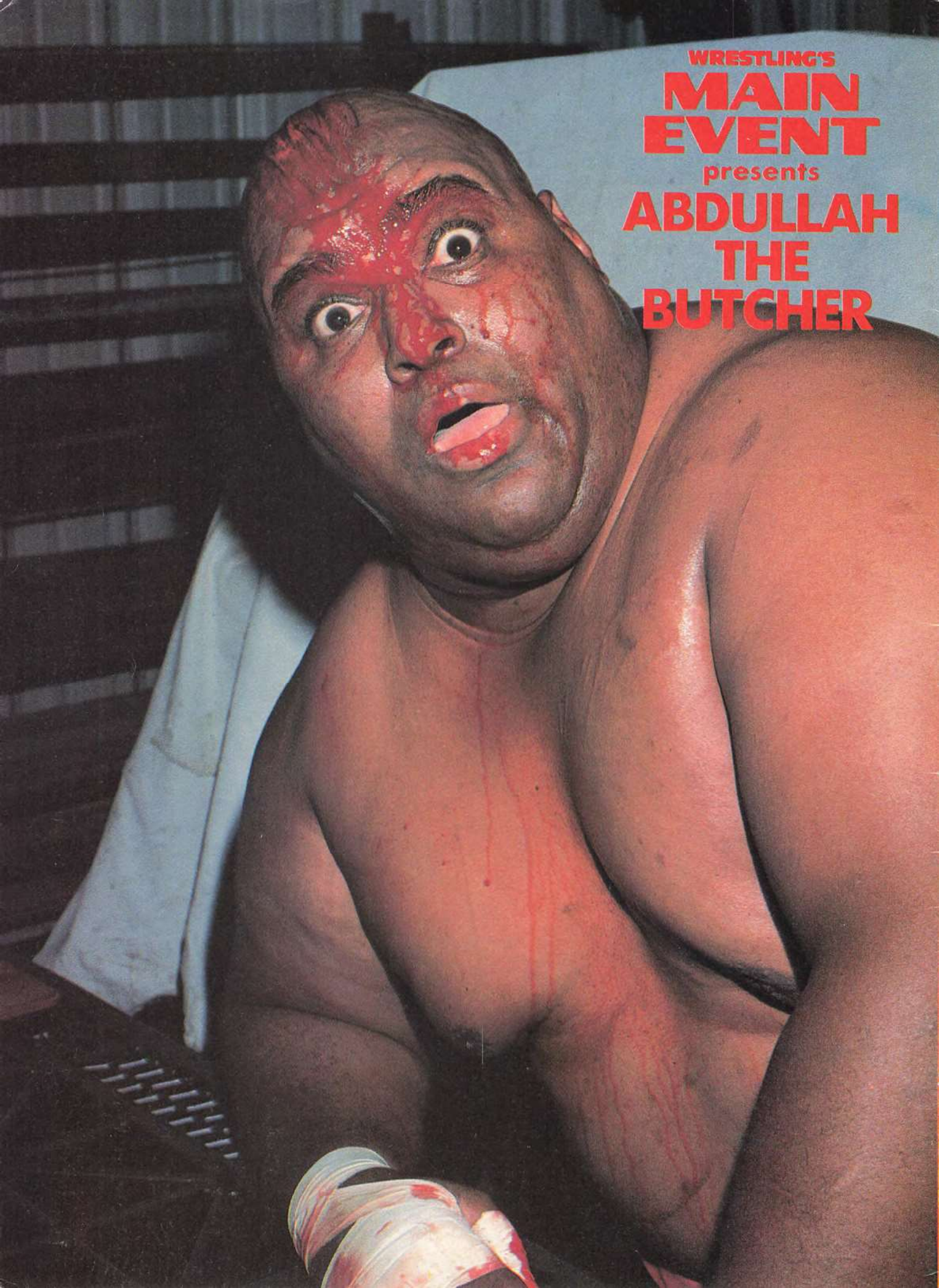
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